



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

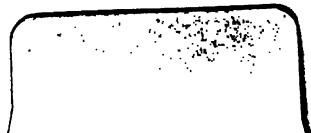
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600071584T

250. & 45.







# NO CHURCH.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“HIGH CHURCH.”

“And as we fall by various ways, and sink  
One deeper than another, self condemned  
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;  
So manifold and various are the ways  
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps  
Of all infirmity, and tending all  
To the same point, attainable by all—  
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.”

WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:  
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,  
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,  
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1861.

*The right of Translation is reserved.*



LONDON:  
PRINTED BY R. BORN, GLOUCESTER STREET,  
REGENT'S PARK.

## PART THE THIRD.

(CONTINUED.)

THE NEW LIFE.



## N O C H U R C H.

---

### CHAPTER XI.

#### FATHER AND LOVER.

AT the breakfast table of the Specklands that same morning, Hugh, in a very few words, laid before the family his new hopes, and the new plans that were based upon them. He took little notice of the surprise visible on the countenances of most of his listeners, but continued and concluded his narration with an amazing *sang froid*, that said a great deal for his command over his feelings. He spoke of two subjects—of the new great hope of his

life, to which other hopes were as nothing, and of that other aim and object of his life that had for years been silently persevered in, and was only then upon the eve of completion. Of the former he spoke first very calmly and determinedly, and his father and mother looked from him to Bessy, and from Bessy to him, and would not have betrayed much greater astonishment had a thunderbolt dropped from the ceiling into the midst of that breakfast tray. Mr. Speckland, senior, looked askance at Hugh, and dodged his great black eyes, which seemed to forbid all reasoning, and muttered at last—

“ Well, it’s a surprise, and I don’t understand it. I can’t make out what time you’ve had to fall in love or think of a wife—but so it is, at all events. It was to be expected, I suppose, and the old woman and I will be two too many in the way. There’s only one thing I have to wish.”

“ What is that? ”

“That you'll *amuse* Bessy Calverton rather more than you have me, or a precious mess you will make of your marriage.”

Hugh laughed and looked at Bessy, who was too timid to meet his glance yet.

“Bessy will not mind me working for the home that keeps us together. And now of the two too many in the way that you speak of, father.”

And Hugh spoke for the first time of the cottage that he had worked so hard for, that was purchased and would be ready in a few weeks for the reception of the old couple, who had been so long recommended country air. He treated it all as a commonplace matter enough, and took no credit on himself for his labour and perseverance; and the old gentleman sat and fidgeted in his chair, and breathed hard, and finally burst into a childish fit of weeping, and possibly understood that stern, grave son of his for the first time in his life.

“ I shall be amused in a minute,” he sobbed—“ don’t anybody speak to me, if you please—see to your mother ! Run for Mrs. Wessinger—there’s a fit of the horrors coming—look at her ! ”

“ I wish to speak of your companion for a little while,” said Hugh—“ of the necessity there is to leave as soon as possible, for Bessy’s sake. The old danger is threatening her again.”

“ Ay, and nearer than you think ! ” exclaimed a voice by the door. Bessy screamed and started to her feet, then sank into a chair again, and clutched Hugh Speckland by the arm. And the faces of the rest were turned towards the door, whereat stood Richard Calverton, *alias* honest Dick, of Choke Street.

Not a pleasant person to look at, in the best of times ; at this particular season, with a countenance smeared by yesterday’s dirt, and with eyes bloodshot and half-closed with yesterday’s drink, as arrant a vagabond as all

Whitechapel could produce. The door was half open, and he leaned with his back against it, and swung with it gently to and fro, enjoying the confusion into which his sudden presence there had thrown that little family party. Hugh Calverton had not turned yet in his direction, but kept his hand on Bessy's arm, as if to assure her by his touch that she was safe near him ; but he bit his lip, and scowled at the humble teapot of block-tin, and was possibly biding his time.

“A pretty piece of kidnapping all this, I must say,” remarked Mr. Calverton, at last ; “and no one man or woman enough to offer an apology for all the trouble and expense that it has cost to find my daughter out—and my daughter sitting there as scared as if I were a Guy Fox or a Beelzebub. Bessy !”

The call to his frightened daughter was sharp and peremptory, and Bessy's hands tightened on her lover's arm.

“Bessy!” he cried again; and Stephen looking towards him, said—

“That’ll do—you need not make that noise here.”

“I’ll make any noise I like, in asking for my rights,” said Calverton, with a stamp of the floor and one of his favourite oaths; “and there’s no one here to stop me—whipper-snapper! Bessy, will you come to me, or shall I fetch you?”

“Will you—” began Stephen.

“Will you hold your tongue, and leave this to me?” cried Hugh Speckland, suddenly leaping to his feet, and making one or two quick steps towards the intruder in his house. The landlord of the “El-Dorado” and the engraver of Seymour Street looked fiercely into each other’s face, and the sternness and the unflinching gaze of the younger man seemed a trifle too much for Dick Calverton, who dropped his eyes, and muttered his daughter’s name again.

“What do you want here?” asked Hugh.

“That’s a question you can answer as well as I,” replied Calverton.

“You are her father?”

“Don’t you see the family likeness?”

“No.”

“It’s a pity your shortsighted.”

“You are her father, and stand here to claim a father’s right—I stand here to dispute it.”

“You!”

And Calverton looked at his adversary from head to foot, and indulged in a snort that was intended for a sneer.

“I dispute it; but I ask you first, if you have the slightest interest in your child’s future welfare, to leave her in a home where she is happy.”

“She’ll come to her own home—I have said it!”

“I say no!”

“You’ll have your say—when you’re be-

fore the magistrate for abduction, my fine fellow."

"As her friend and adviser, I say No!—As her future husband, I say fifty times No!"

"You may say it a hundred times, if you like—what the devil does it matter to me how many times you say it?"

"You alluded to the law a moment since, Mr. Calverton—to the law I recommend you; face it, if you dare, with your claim to destroy the soul of your own child. There is no other answer to your demand to be obtained in this house. Take it, and rid us of your presence."

"I want my child—I'll have her."

"Not by force," said Hugh, as he quickly stepped before Richard Calverton, who had made a movement towards Bessy; "my will is law here, and I am accustomed to obedience. Will you keep back, or shall I throw you into the street?"

It was Hugh's turn to stamp with his foot,

and to frown at Richard Calverton, and clench his fists. Richard Calverton paused and took in the proportions of his adversary with his evil glance, and thought twice about resistance to a man many years his junior, and a trifle over six feet in height. Dick Calverton was a loud-speaking man, a boaster and a braggart, but he was not a brave man, and the determination visible on the darkling face before him deterred honest Dick from asserting his paternal authority too forcibly just then. Between Hugh Speckland and a little one-eyed quarryman there was a wide difference, and no one was quicker to perceive it than Bessy Calverton's father.

“Ask Bessy if she will come home with me?”

“Oh! no, no—not that dreadful home again!” cried our heroine. “Father, you must let me stop here—if you have ever loved me, wished my happiness, you will not seek to take me back.”

“You’re not your own mistress by law and —and you don’t know what’s best for you,” he growled.

“Will you leave my house?” asked Hugh, peremptorily.

“I don’t know that I will,” with a flash of his old surliness; “I don’t know that I’m not a match for you, and I’m big enough to take my part, and give as well as take. By —— who are you after all, but a black-faced kidnapper, that shall be transported before I’ve done with you. By —— you’ll find your match if you lay a finger on me—ah! would you?”

Hugh made one step closer to him, and assumed an attitude more threatening, and Bessy screamed and implored him to desist; and Richard Calverton rather hastily stepped back, continuing his vituperations meanwhile, and braving it out to the last. And as Hugh Speckland advanced, Richard Calverton backed step by step into

the passage, where, in the midst of his easy flow of powerful language, he backed into the arms of a policeman kindly waiting for him in the passage.

“Hullo!” cried Dick Calverton, wrenching himself from the arms of the new comer, and turning a shade paler through his dirt, “what’s this?—what’s up?—what have I done?”

“You’re Richard Calverton of the ‘El-Dorado’—aint you?”

“What of it?”

“Then you’re my prisoner—if you’re going to ride rusty, say so, and I’ll call in a friend of mine who’s waiting for you outside.”

“Call the devil if you like—I’m an honest man.”

The policeman stepped to the door and called Bill, instead of the gentleman recommended; and Bill came clamping into the passage, from which Calverton had hastily retreated.

“What’s the charge against me?” he muttered, scowling at the two representatives of the law from under the shabby brim of his hat.

“Gold dust—that’s all.”

“Gold dust,” with a shrug of his broad shoulders; “I know nothing of gold dust, and have never heard of any. I haven’t said I’m Richard Calverton yet, so don’t be in a hurry. Let a fellow think.”

The policeman Bill went to the door and called a third person, who came stealthily into the passage, and crept into the room, with his face half turned to the wall.

“Is that him?” asked Bill of the new comer.

“Yes,” was the low answer.

Richard Calverton leaped in the air to give full effect to the double stamp with which he descended and shook the house; then with a fresh torrent of oaths he made a rush towards that man who had been so long his

slave, and who had turned at last and betrayed him to the Philistines. But Richard Calverton only ran into the arms of the outraged law—that held him tightly this time, and kept him fast.

“There has been a reward offered—and you’ve kept me poor, and treated me ill, and trampled on me—and I’ve turned at last”—said Charles Edwin, with a vindictive glance towards his brother, “was there anything else to be expected?”

“I wish I had you by the throat, for swearing away an honest man’s life. Mind you,” he cried, as a bright idea suggested itself, “it’s all the reward that has turned that cursed viper’s fangs against me, and made him tell a heap of lies—all lies, by everything that’s holy!”

“You’ll come quietly?”

“Of course I will. Innocence can walk uprightly and keep its gallows back straight with the best of you.”

He looked towards Bessy, who stood with clasped hands watching him ; but the frown which he bestowed on her for her attention was neither amiable nor paternal. The policemen walked him into the street, kindly linking their arms through his ; and a crowd of little boys who had been attracted, as street boys are, by a policeman on the look-out, received the *cortège* with shouts, and gambols, and back somersaults, and proceeded to accompany honest Dick and his companions any distance whatsoever under fifty miles.

Charles Edwin remained with his head against the wall in the sitting-room of the Specklands, and it was some moments before his presence there was noticed in the confusion that followed a passionate outburst of tears on the part of Bessy Calverton. When Hugh had calmed her, by reminding her of the dangers from which she had escaped, and of the absence of all share in the crime which

that morning's events had shadowed forth, Charles Edwin was observed for the first time.

“ You are not wanted here,” said Hugh.

“ I suppose not—I suppose not,” said he, beginning to creep towards the door. “ I haven't stopped for thanks ; perhaps I don't deserve any.”

“ Thanks for what ? ” asked Stephen.

“ For saving that girl from him,” pointing to his niece—“ from the ‘ El-Dorado,’ and all the Devilry that goes on there. I don't say that I haven't brooded on my wrongs in my way, and nursed them, and felt inclined to fly at his throat a hundred times—for he was a coward and a knave, and I was his own brother ! But I might have only brooded, if he hadn't found where Bessy was living, and swore to bend her to his will, and crush her. And Bessy had been kind to an old man, and given him kind words, and I was grateful for it. I can remember a kindness as well as a wrong ; and to save that girl from my brother

was to offer her another chance of living honest. I've done it for the best, whatever comes of it. She was worth saving, and he was good for nothing. That's all."

And the old spy and informer shuffled out of the room, and gave one more glance to Bessy before he passed into the passage and went down the single stone step before the door into the street.

" 'Another chance of living honest,' " quoted Hugh—"ay, and of living happy," he added. "Don't grieve, Bessy—all is for the best."

"But he is my father, and they are taking him to prison!" cried Bessy. "Oh! if he had been a different man, and loved me ever so little!"

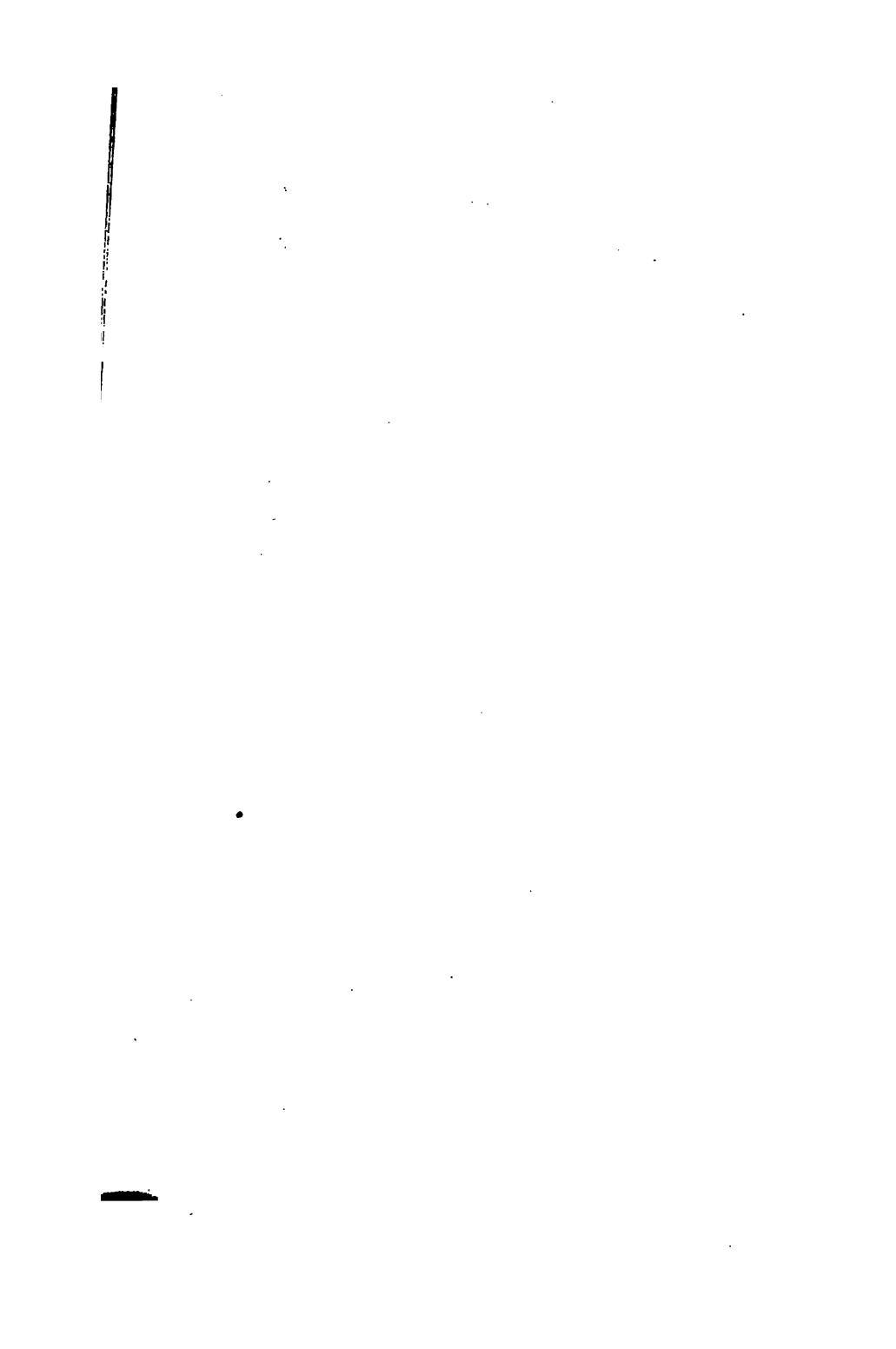
It was the strange, yearning voice of one who missed the love and affection that should have been her right—of one still standing alone in the world, perhaps, with those to whom her heart would have clung the most

fondly, holding aloof from it, and passing her by.

Is it not always so in the great world in which we dreamers live?—in which so many hopes are born and wither, and so many vain ambitions burst like bubbles in the sun? Setting out upon the tortuous road, the end of which is veiled, wisely and mercifully, in mystery, how many friends do we meet who judge us wrongly, and think lightly of us, and to whom our hearts will cling the fonder, though we wander on and keep our lips sealed?—from whom, such is the perverse law that rules our human nature, only a word, a look, a sigh, is needed to make us leap towards them, and betray the secret that we mask with smiles. And the world spins round, and we wander on our way; and they are wandering, too, who love us not, and whose names are whispered in our prayers.

END OF THE THIRD PART.

c 2



**P A R T   T H E   F O U R T H.**

**TRoubLED WATERS.**



## CHAPTER I.

## LEARNING TO LOVE.

THE gold-dust case was clear against Richard Calverton, and all the protestations of his innocence were coldly listened to by a sceptical judge. The case was intricate, and the counsel for the defence was of a subtle mind and deep in flaws, but Charles Edwin was a witness whose testimony was hard to shake; and Bessy's father was transported for fourteen years, and remained "Honest Dick" no longer. Society had found him out, and turned its back upon him, and all the brightness of his future—that he had worked for,

and looked forward to—was shut from him for ever. If he had only stopped short just before that gold-dust robbery, and had no hand in it, and sold the “El-Dorado,” and added the proceeds arising from that sale to his own hard earnings, he might have retired into private life, and been the SWELL for which he had toiled, and striven, and prayed. Not such a swell as a few years’ more work without a cross would have made of him, but still comfortably off, the possessor of a dog-cart and a fast-trotting horse, the patronizer of prize-fights, the keeper of a safe book for the Derby, the oracle of some snug bar-parlour, the wearer of white hats, and startling coats, and gorgeous velvet waistcoats.

And Fate was hard upon him, and had cut him off in his prime, and he was going to the Bermudas for change of air and scene. He might die out there; or even if he worked his time out, why, fourteen years, added to fifty-two, made sixty-six—a drivelling, toothless old

humbug he should be by that time ! There was no help for it, however, let him fold his arms and give up grumbling. He shouldn't die happy now, unless kind fortune threw a chance in his way of throttling Charles Edwin ; he did not see very clearly how that was to come about, but he would think of such a contingency—it relieved the monotony of his position. If he could only throttle that two-faced brother of his, he would feel more resigned to the strong current of ill-luck which was bearing him away.

Previous to his trial he had the forethought to make over his "little bit of property" to his wife—neither Charles Edwin nor Bessy, nor Lotty, should touch a farthing of his money. They had been all against him, and opposed his brotherly and fatherly wishes for their good ; and Mrs. Calverton had been docile and obedient, and allowed herself to be knocked down almost without a murmur. She would, probably, drink herself to death ;

but it was a happy death he thought, now the law forbade him spirituous compounds, or even a glass of porter—or she would marry Joe, the barman, when he was across “the herring-pond.” Joe was of insinuating manners, not too particular, and cared no more for bigamy than a brass farthing.

He went away sternly refusing to see Bessy Calverton to the last, and leaving his curse to Charles Edwin in a neat little blasphemous note, which the governor, who objected to swearing, never forwarded to its right destination.

And the “El-Dorado” broke up like a card-board castle when Richard Calverton’s sentence was formally pronounced at the Old Bailey, and all its inmates scattered right and left. Joe, of insinuating manners, proved himself not too particular, by absconding with all the cash he could conveniently lay hands on, and left the fascinating Mrs. Calverton to those who had more time and inclination ; and

Mrs. Calverton retired into private life, and began the drinking process at once, and quarrelled with Lotty, who vanished her own way, too, and defied all Bessy's attempts to find her out. Charles Edwin, on the strength of his blood-money, emigrated to the West End, and, abandoning postage stamps, set up as "a medium," and found the business prosper on the instant—like a reward and blessing for his many virtues.

Should we be drawing true to nature if we depicted Bessy Calverton as deeply moved by her father's calamity, and deaf to the consolation that would teach her resignation for a parent's loss? Bessy had escaped a great danger, the chance of a return to the past hateful life; and her father had ever been her evil genius, crushing ruthlessly every fair blossom that was put forth to the light. He was a man dead to all moral principle, selfish, heartless, and cruel—he had never been a father to her—was it natural that she should

mourn for him? And yet the name of father exerted its influence, too; she had seen and read of other fathers who were kind and loving, and her bible had taught her to honour the name, and to offer good for evil. In the common order of events they were never to meet again; and she had been anxious to see him, to waken in him some little affection for her at the last, to be gladdened perhaps by some little show of repentance for all the guilty past. But we have seen that misfortune had not softened Richard Calverton, and that he went his way stern and obdurate.

And Bessy, freed from his presence, took heart again and was learning happiness in Seymour Street. Life was opening fairly before her, and Hugh Speckland saw not in her the convict's daughter, but seemed to love her more for the trouble she had borne, and the dangers from which she had escaped.

Bessy was learning happiness, we have said, for she was learning to love Hugh Speckland, whose character under the fair sun that shone on him was developing every day. His had been a transition state, as Stephen had prophesied, and now a great labour was ended and he stood on the threshold of a new life. The cottage in the country had been prepared for his parents, but Hugh was in no hurry to see them depart and take Bessy along with them. So long as they remained with him Bessy remained also, but until she was his wife she could not be left with him, Stephen, and his blind sister. He was anxious to marry at once, and make sure of Bessy and happiness ; but Bessy had a will of her own, and would not marry in haste. She felt assured she should soon learn to return Hugh's affection as it deserved to be returned, but until that period arrived she would put off the day that made her his young wife. In the impulse of the moment she had

accepted him, actuated by a little feeling of resentment against her adviser, though she did not own that—though she would never, never own that to herself!

But she was learning to be happy now—at present not quite happy, only learning and striving hard to feel more grateful for the chances of life that had been generously offered her. She wished at times she could feel more happy—just a little more able to look forward with a hopeful heart to becoming Hugh's wife. She wished he were a year or two younger at times, or a trifle less stern and decisive—that he was more like Stephen Speckland, in fact. Hugh had altered very much for the better, was seldom irritable or sternly misanthropic now; still he was always grave and thoughtful, and regarded things too earnestly. But, oh! she should love him very shortly now—he was so fond of her, he thought so much of all she did and said. Why, he did not mind *her*

interrupting him fifty times a day over his work, in fact he seemed to work with greater spirit if she stood and watched his labours. She only displeased him now in the matter of postponing the marriage day, and her firmness in that respect brought a furrow or two to his high forehead.

“Am I to serve seven years for you, Bessy, as Jacob did for Rachel?” he asked one day.

“No, no, Hugh—only a little while. You must give me time to think—I am so very young still.”

“Eighteen years of age—and knowing your own mind,” said he; “what is there to wait for?”

Bessy pleaded her youth again; the little time she and Hugh had known each other.

“You fear my constancy, then,” said he, gravely.

No, she did not fear that; but she thought it was better to wait a little while, and learn to

study each other's character a little, before marrying in haste. There was no occasion for hurry now—they were engaged, and had faith in each other.

“But this is living in a world of uncertainty, and I am a lover of dates, Bessy. Give me a fixed time to look forward to, and I can work patiently towards it, and fear nothing ; but day after day, week after week, and no nearer happiness, will not suit me ?”

“A fixed time,” repeated Bessy, blushing and looking down.

“Choose it yourself, Bessy,” said Hugh ; “take any time that seems best—every day I shall be advancing towards it. Select your own time, and I will not complain ; but remember, Bessy, to that time I bind you irreversibly.”

Bessy hesitated, but Hugh Speckland would remain no longer in doubt.

“I should like a year—one full year, Hugh. It is not a long while to us, who are both

young," she added, as his face shadowed a little.

"One year from this day—that will be the 22nd of April, 18—, our marriage day, Bessy Calverton," said the precise Hugh.

"But—"

"But you have fixed your own time, and it is finally decided on," interrupted he, with some little impatience; "is it not distant enough, Bessy, that you again hesitate and turn colour? Twelve long months to test that constancy which you doubt?"

"No, I do not doubt it," cried Bessy, quickly.

"I am glad to hear it," was the answer; "that gives me patience to wait; you shall not hear a word of complaint from me again as to the unreasonable time that keeps us apart. Let me consider it a test by which you would judge the strength of my love, and it becomes a happy time, full of promise."

Bessy sighed, and his searching eyes were bent full on her again.

“You do not fear any diminution in *your* love, Bessy?” he asked. “It is not that which has set my happiness so far away?”

“Oh! no—with every day I shall esteem you more—I feel assured of it,” cried Bessy.

He did not relish the word “esteem;” but she was young and timid, and it was natural that she should shun a more forcible expression of her feelings towards him. She loved him, or she would never have said “yes” to his love-suit—and he had made a wise choice, he was certain. In the long winter evenings, when he had sat apart at his work, and before he had given voice to his secret, he had made his choice in his heart, and thought what a bright figure in his home that young girl would make. She was a bright figure then, and he had silently watched her, and prayed inwardly that she might learn to love him some day, and gladden a life that had

not till that hour an idea of what true happiness meant. Methodical, grave, and hard-working, this fairy face had beamed suddenly upon him, and changed the whole tenor of his thoughts—lifted the veil from his inner life, and showed him what an ascetic and a misanthrope he had been rapidly becoming. For ten years, dating from his entrance into manhood, he had thought only of working hard and earning money—what was one more year to him now, with Bessy at its expiration, to give him her love, and call him husband? In matters of sentiment he was a child still; and Bessy's manner might have troubled one who had mixed more with the opposite sex; but he was certain that she loved him; she had a quiet way of showing her affection, and he was twelve years her senior, and grave in his manner, and perhaps she was not quite used to him yet. He did not look very grave, however, after Bessy's last warm expression of her feelings, even though she had talked of

esteem instead of love. She had asserted her confidence, and would love him dearer every day, and his heart leaped at the thought.

“Why, what a storehouse of affection there will have accumulated at the end of a year, Bessy!” he cried; “that is a great prize to wait for—a rare dowry to bring with you to the altar. I can understand that happiness now, which I have read of in books and shrugged my shoulders at—fully realize that despair which poets paint in their verses when such a happiness is snatched from their arms.”

“You are not like Stephen, then.”

Hugh looked at Bessy for an explanation, and she reminded him of his own words, that Stephen would recover from a disappointment in a week.

“He has a light heart, and it takes no very deep impression, I fancy,” said he; “but I was harsh in my remarks then, and unjust towards that frank nature which has rendered this place for so many years home-like. A dis-

appointment would affect him, though it would not break his heart, or alter him very much."

"Would it alter you, then, Hugh?" asked Bessy.

"It would cast me back to darker thoughts than those from which I have recently emerged," said he; "it would destroy all confidence in woman, all hope in a fair life and a bright future; it would render me hard, and cruel and unforgiving. Take care, Bessy," he said, with a smile; "I shall never forgive you if you prove false. Deceive me once, and I am your enemy."

He spoke with a smile, but Bessy shuddered. Looking up into his face, she could imagine how it would harden, and those eyes gather fire, if he were made a dupe of, or woke up for a single instant to deceit. His was a nature that could love warmly; but still it was an unforgiving nature, and she feared it—a jealous nature, perhaps, and from jealousy springs envy, and hatred and distrust.

But she was learning to love him, and the task was growing easier every day. She had spoken from the heart when she had said that with every day she should esteem him more ; that task would not be difficult at least.

He was so kind and so considerate now ; every little action betrayed some thought of her, and some new interest. He had found her once in tears, and, pressing her for a reason, she had related Lotty's history, or rather all that she knew of that dark life, and of the faint struggles her sister made at times to live better and resist temptation ; and Hugh had warmed at the story.

“ You will meet her again, Bessy,” said he, “ and the time will come when we may both be able to assist her.”

“ You will not turn away from her, Hugh, like all the rest ? ” she cried ; “ you will strive with me to save her, when that time comes of which you speak ? ”

“ I promise that with all my heart.”

And in a future time, at a period of sorrow for her of which she dreamed not then, he reminded her—he who never forgot—of that promise made during their engagement !

And the engagement continued, and Bessy continued to learn the lesson she had set herself. She knew now that she had done wrong in so hastily replying to that question put to her by Hugh, and which affected her whole life ; but she was striving to make amends for it, and the effort was no longer difficult. And in the midst of all she forgot not her old promise to the minister who had first saved her from danger ; and the result of her efforts in that direction, backed by the love she had gained, was encouraging, at least. Hugh Speckland laid aside his engraving of a Sunday—even went to church with her to hear Mr. Parslow now—and Mr. Parslow, being neither a High-Churchman nor a tub-thumper, and having his say in the pulpit without a chance of being interrupted by Hugh, made the strong-minded

man below him think, once or twice, if his own reasoning had been the best in the world.

But he would not own to Bessy that he was a convert to any particular views yet ; he only laughed when she pressed him to acknowledge that a No-Church existence was a miserable one after all.

“I go to church because it is a pleasure to accompany Bessy Calverton—to feel her hand on my arm, and think that hand will be placed in mine some day, a pledge of love, honour and obedience. Don’t let me take credit for being a religious man, Bessy.”

But the work still remained untouched of a Sunday, and a good habit, once persevered in, is as strong as a bad one. Stephen even took a fancy to imitate Hugh’s example, though he went to a church of his own, and did not adopt the new plan of crossing London Bridge every Sunday to hear Mr. Parslow. And even the old gentleman, caring not to be left alone in the house, thought there might

be a little amusement to be found at church—especially about the hymns—and perhaps after all it was a little unthankful, now he was coming into his cottage. Bessy had said so, and Bessy exercised a power over that household that was second only to Hugh's. He would go with Lucy and the good lady, and just try it.

So Hugh and Bessy took long walks to Whitechapel by themselves, and coming home again talked a good deal of their future. Bessy found courage to talk of it soon—and Bessy thought Mrs. Wessinger was right about a castle-building family, for Hugh was as sanguine as the rest now, and piled up fairy fabrics, wherein no human being, with human passions, human weakness, could possibly live.

Still it made the present bright to talk of them, although the future—such as they painted it—was a fallacy, and the real future advancing was full of trouble undreamed of.

## CHAPTER II.

## VISITORS TO SEYMOUR STREET.

THE day was finally fixed for the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Speckland to their little country home. For the departure of Bessy Calverton also, whose movements were to be regulated by the old couple till that momentous twenty-second of April, decided upon by the matter-of-fact Hugh. The boxes were packed, and waiting in the passage; and there were more gloomy faces than one in Seymour Street, with the idea of separation. Even Stephen Speckland's spirits were not of the best in the few days before departure;



but then his health was not of the best either, and Bessy fancied that his hollow cough had been more troublesome of late. But perhaps it *was* all fancy, for he laughed when Bessy taxed him with her suspicions, and said he never felt better in his life. He took that opportunity also of alluding to Bessy's coming departure.

“‘When shall we *two* meet again,’ Bessy,” said he, “after you have left Seymour Street, I wonder? Don’t look surprised—I have spent my life in wondering, if you recollect.”

“Do you think it will be a very long while, Stephen?” asked Bessy.

“I am busy all the week, and Hugh will expect me to take care of Lucy on Sunday, whilst he runs down by the train to keep you company.”

“But Lucy and you will come with him, now and then.”

“Lucy may. I had my holiday in the country years ago—that was my first and last.”

“Your father and mother will expect to see you sometimes.”

“So they will—I forgot them.”

He did not appear anxious to continue the conversation, however, and left Bessy perplexed at his evasive replies.

On the evening of that day on which this dialogue took place no less a personage than Mr. Parslow made his appearance in Seymour Street. It was some time before he stated the object of his visit, or paid any particular attention to Bessy, although there was a nervousness and excitability in his demeanour that he found some difficulty to repress.

“So you think of sending Bessy into the country, Mr. Hugh?” he said, addressing that gentleman, as he stood by his side and watched his attention to the wood-block.

Hugh had fallen into the good habit of treating the reverend gentleman with less courtesy since attending his little church in Whitechapel, and he answered in the

affirmative, and asked if Mr. Parslow had any objection to urge.

“No—that is—that is, I fancy that Bessy Calverton will find it rather dull in the country with your parents—that your parents, in fact, are not the most fit companions for her.”

“I don’t see any help for it,” said he; “it is Bessy’s wish now.”

“I suppose if a home could be found in London for her, it would be more convenient to you—and not very objectionable to your parents, who, it strikes me, will find Bessy just a little in the way.”

Hugh turned quickly to the minister with those dark, searching eyes of his.

“If you have any proposition to make, I shall be glad to hear it. There has seemed to me no alternative but that of Bessy’s accompanying my mother, until this home becomes hers by right.”

“But there is an alternative, if you have

no objection," said he; "I take it that your wish in the matter is to be considered now."

"Thank you," answered Hugh.

"I have not mentioned it to Bessy, because I feel pretty well assured that her heart will jump at the idea too readily; and as it is just next door to impossible to guess what *your* ideas are likely to be, till you divulge them yourself, I thought I would not broach the subject until your consent was obtained."

"I have no wish contrary to Bessy's—mention it to her, and leave her to decide."

"Bless my soul, how very much you have altered!" remarked Mr. Parslow.

Hugh bent his head lower over his work to conceal a smile.

"Love as well as time works wonders—eh, Mr. Hugh?"

"I don't dispute the assertion."

"I had my doubts once what kind of a husband you would make, but I am gaining confidence daily. I shall not give up your acquaintance, sir, for a long while to come now; and when you and Bessy are married, I shall look in very often, if it be only for the sake of a good argument now and then."

"Argument tries the temper."

"But you are 'leaning to virtue's side,'" cried the incumbent; "you come with Bessy to church."

"I would go anywhere with her."

"But you don't mean to tell me it is only for her sake that you come to church, my dear sir? You don't bring your worldly ideas, your worldly affections, into St. Owen's?"

"Sometimes, if the truth must be told."

"You'll never come to any good then."

Hugh laughed.

"Your very love will turn against you and betray you, if you make it your idol."

“It is something new for me to love, Mr. Parslow,” replied Hugh; “it is a new sensation, that chases away all my dark thoughts, and renders me susceptible to new impressions—even less of a sceptic. All this is a new world to me, and time will do its best to mould my character afresh.”

“Well spoken. Upon my word,” rubbing one of his thin hands over the other, “it is pleasant to hear a man of thirty—a man of the world—talk of love with all a fledgling’s enthusiasm.”

“You would not have me ashamed of my passion?”

“God forbid, my dear sir—it is singular, but it has made you better already.”

“I agree with you.”

“And that is more singular still. Patience! only to think that for once in his life Hugh Speckland agrees with me! I say, with Dominie Sampson, ‘Prodigious!’”

“Well,” said Hugh, frankly, “I cannot

say that I am not a better man—that I have not new thoughts, that help to raise me from rather a low estate. Six months ago my greatest ambition was to earn money, gain a higher name in my profession, and rise a little from Seymour Street. I would have been content with that ambition, and worked hard all my life, and scraped money together, and sealed my heart up hermetically. Now I have brighter thoughts mixed with my fame-longings."

" May they endure."

" Surely they will, unless—unless she fades from me, and leaves me despairing."

" What do you mean ?" asked Mr. Parslow.

" I have been used to disappointments all my life, Mr. Parslow—I am not what the world calls a lucky man. The prize before me, and my hand stretched towards it, and lo ! it has withered, or eluded my touch. I build too much upon this love of mine ; I bind

with it too many hopes, and I fear sometimes that the God I have turned my back against may punish me now, and snatch her from me when my hopes are highest. It seems too great a happiness ever to think of her as mine—standing by my side, bearing my name, sharing my cares and my joys, my rebuffs and my triumphs."

"It is not my place to say, set your heart on things of this world," said Mr. Parslow; "it is a world wherein trouble and disappointment fall to every man's share."

"I am an enthusiast, and must think of this world—it is nearest my heart."

"I'm very sorry for it," remarked Mr. Parslow; "but I am afraid there are one or two erring mortals in a similar way to yourself. The best of us are of the world, worldly. Still, young man, do think a little now and then of another and better world—it will reconcile you to the disappointments of this."

Hugh took it as a trite remark, to which there was no occasion to reply, and turned the conversation by abandoning his work, and coming to Bessy's side.

“ Bessy, Mr. Parslow, I believe, has a proposition to make,” he said.

“ Just a little one, Miss Bessy,” was the reply of that reverend gentleman, “ for the consideration of yourself and friends : I have a new home to offer you—the only objection to which is, it is not in the country.”

Bessy looked anxiously at Mr. Parslow. She did not care for the country now ; she would have preferred to stay in London, and see Hugh Speckland of an evening. She had begun to think it would be very dull without Hugh Speckland ; very dull spending the long evenings playing cribbage with an old gentleman of variable temper.

“ Mrs. Wessinger,” was the prompt response of Bessy.

“ Mrs. Wessinger has left Snowfields,” said

Mr. Parslow, to Bessy's surprise, "and given up shoe-binding for a long time to come. I have been the means of obtaining her a situation as housekeeper to a lady."

"Oh ! dear, what will become of me when my 'horrors' come on ?" was the exclamation of Mrs. Speckland.

"Why, are you not going into the country, my dear madam, where no horrors can disturb you ?" replied Mr. Parslow.

"I'm not so sure of that."

"And is it not enough to get rid of your horrors for ever, to think another hard-working friend has risen a little in life, and likely to do well ?"

Mrs. Speckland sighed. Perhaps it was ; but then she had lost that friend who cheered her in lonely moments, and who allowed herself to be scolded when the horrors were surmounted—she had relied on her even in the country, if necessity required it.

"And the lady wants a companion now,

and I thought Bessy might suit her. Bessy Calverton is going to be married some day ; and by the laws of courtship in general—see what a deal I know about them !—lovers should not live too far apart from each other.”

“ And the lady—” began Lucy.

“ Is coming here to answer for herself,” concluded Mr. Parslow ; “ I expect her here at eight this evening. It must be nearly eight now, I think ; ” and his fingers, which had not lost their old habit of straying to his waistcoat pocket, went in search of the plated watch that had flown away to keep its New Year with bad company.

“ It struck eight five minutes since.”

“ Hum,” mused the minister, “ not so punctual as I should have anticipated. I should have taken her for a very precise, formal little body, who kept telegraph time, and was true to a second. I should have—there she is ! ”

And a brisk rat-a-tat on the outer door seemed to announce the lady who was in search of a companion. Mr. Parslow ran to open it as though he were used to the business, and presently returned rubbing one hand over the other in a pleasant state of exhilaration, and announced, in an eccentric fashion—

“The lady I was speaking of, ladies and gentlemen.”

And the lady, followed by the smiling Mrs. Wessinger, made her appearance, and Bessy leaped up with a cry of delight, and ran into the arms of Mary Davis, late of Aberogwin, North Wales.

“Oh! my dear, dear cousin Mary, how glad I am to see you!”

“And my dear, dear Bessy, how glad I am too—and how you have grown—and I don’t think I should have known you—and how you are crumpling all my crape tucks!—but never mind; kiss me again, my dear.”

And Mary Davis began to speak hoarsely,

and to shed a few tears in the first moments of meeting.

“I’m not so strong-minded as I used to be,” she observed, when she and Bessy had recovered the emotion natural to such a meeting as theirs; “time and trouble have affected my nerves a little.”

Bessy looked at her, and the black dress struck her for the first time.

“Uncle Davis?” she exclaimed.

“In heaven, I trust, my dear. He was a good man.”

“Poor uncle!”

Bessy Davis had long since forgiven his stern rules, his harsh discipline, and looked back with regret to the Welsh cottage wherein she had lived with him. In the few moments of Bessy’s last meeting with him on earth, he had spoken of his love for her, and his heartfelt wish for her happy future, before the grim father had borne her away. Bessy had not thought it a last meeting then; not until

“ Oh ! I beg your pardon—I was giving you the wrong husband, Bessy ;” and Bessy smiled faintly by way of response. She felt very dull just then, and it was all Stephen Speckland’s fault ; had he treated the matter lightly, and turned it aside with his customary laugh, she could have joined in the jest, but his embarrassment startled her, and made her heart sink. In the whirl of fancies with which her brain was troubled there darted at times some suspicion of a truth, which her life was spent in pressing down and keeping hidden ; and in that moment it passed like lightning athwart her again, and scathed her. And she felt her cheeks redden when looking up she met the eyes of her betrothed fixed upon her.

“ Is anything the matter ?” he asked, huskily.

“ No, Hugh—what should there be ?”

“ Miss Davis’s mistake has disturbed you ?”

“ No,” said Bessy ; “ why should it ?”

Miss Perkins?"  
allow me to  
husband of

her hand to

not be a friend  
very tiresome  
her happiness,  
apparent."  
cause to com-  
piness depends

is with the rest  
d it was some  
ould find an op-  
w words of greet-  
ing once secured  
eched forth into a  
ne new young mis-  
found for her.  
ar, now," said Mrs.



“ Oh ! I beg your pardon—  
you the wrong husband, Bes-  
smiled faintly by way of re-  
very dull just then, and it  
Speckland’s fault ; had he  
lightly, and turned it aside  
laugh, she could have jo-  
his embarrassment star-  
bling—  
her heart sink. In th-  
which her brain was  
at times some suspicio-  
we won’t be  
life was spent in pr-  
as he was lucky.  
hidden ; and in that he had have turned out  
lightning athwart her nice for his daughter—  
And she felt her ch-  
ever a woman deserved  
up she met the ey-  
upon her. like her.”

“ Is anything patient, and gentle !—can I  
huskily.

“ No, Hugh—; found those virtues strik-

“ Miss Davis when she was a child, although

“ No,” said her and known her to have

been one of the best-meaning little souls in the world. Time and trouble had altered her too—and for the better, which time and trouble do not always, unfortunately.

“I fancy, my dear Bessy,” said Mrs. Wessinger, in a lower tone, “that the old gentleman died hard at last. It’s only fancy at present, but it’s my idea that his money troubled him, and he saw that his love for it had squeezed him in a little. I think so, because Miss Davis cares so little for money herself, and seems so anxious to do all the good with it she can, and give it away right and left. A blessed young woman as ever I met with in my life. *Oh!—*”

“Is anything the matter, Mrs. Wessinger?”

“No, my dear,” replied that good lady, whose right hand, in the absence of the work to which it had become habituated, had been gently see-sawing all this time—“only—*oh!*”

Mrs. Wessinger was looking straight before her, and gasping for breath.

“I shall be better in a minute, my dear—don’t notice me. My breath’s clean taken away with such a wonderful idea—such a surprising idea !”

“What is it ?”

“Don’t ask me, my dear—you won’t know for a year or two, and then it will all come true, and I can say, ‘there—that’s my doing !’” Then she added, as Bessy still continued to regard her with amazement—“And don’t look so alarmed, Bessy ; I’m not out of my mind yet. Oh ! dear,” with a sigh, “how I do miss those shoes of mine !”

Mrs. Wessinger was anxious to turn the conversation to shoes, and distract Bessy’s attention from the one wonderful idea that had seized her ; and when “shoebinding” failed as a topic, she spoke of Hugh Speckland, and of the life for Bessy that would lie before her some twelvemonths hence. And Bessy found that subject more interesting, whilst Mary Davis was laying her plans before the

in regard to her, and spoke as  
if she were ~~conscious~~ of the change in him and  
of the ~~conscious~~ ~~conscious~~ of his love, and ~~conscious~~ and  
as though she had ~~conscious~~ learning  
to love him, and knew the lesson by heart, and  
was proud of her knowledge. For eighteen  
years are not adamant; and a deep earnest  
love must affect them if the heart thinks but  
kindly of him who casts at her feet all his  
hopes.

"I shall be better  
don't notice me.  
away with such a  
surprising idea!"

"What is it?"

"Don't ask me  
for a year or two  
true, and I can say, III.  
Then she added, M U S C H.  
regard her with  
look so alarmed, was Bessy Calverton  
mind yet. Oh! my Davis; and the day  
*do* miss those show departure of the old

Mrs. Wessinger angry — whether Lucy conversation to a few days' change, and attention from ~~was~~ less heavy — witnessed had seized her; our heroine as companion as a topic, she spoke many shares had raised to of the life for benevolence.

her some twelve and chosen the quiet little  
found that subject Marslow had recommended  
Mary Davis was neighbourhood of St. Owen's.

And Bessy was not long in her new home before she remarked that Mary Davis was changed: that she took larger, broader views of religion and its duties; and that all the little irritable fits of the past had by some strange metamorphosis, been transformed into those virtues of which Mrs. Wessinger had spoken. Still it was the same Mary Davis, but always in those best moods which had made the happiest portion of Bessy's life amongst the mountains, and preserving amidst her prim, methodical ways, that rapidity of movement which was a family inheritance.

Mrs. Wessinger was a shrewd observer, to have guessed by the few remarks on money, its value and uses, that uncle Davis had, as she termed it, died hard. Such had been the case; and in his last illness, when left to ponder on his ruling passion, he had not spared himself, or the error of his life—for he was a conscientious and a just man. He knew then

## CHAPTER III.

## B R O A D C H U R C H .

IT was arranged that Bessy Calvert should live with Mary Davis; and the day that witnessed the departure of the young couple for the country — whither Lucy went with them for a few days' change, as to make the parting less heavy — witnessed the installation of our heroine as companion to the lady whom mining shares had raised to something like affluence.

Mary Davis had chosen the quiet little home which Mr. Parslow had recommended for her, in the neighbourhood of St. Owen

side, as she had done for many years. She found herself, in her own ideas of wealth, a rich woman—certainly possessed of a larger income than she, as a single lady with simple wants and a horror of display, could easily spend. She had seen how the garnering of money for its own sake had warped a naturally devout nature, and had set about the task of atonement with a zeal that only a good woman in her best moods has ever the power or the inclination to persevere in. We of sterner stuff, men of the world, worldly, as Mr. Parslow declared, may have our spasmodic promptings to do good for our fellow-men, and help those who are in need; but the effort grows slack, and the huge account-books, or the pleasure-trips in the summer, or the dinner-parties we intend to give, and take the shine out of our friends and acquaintances who give dinner-parties also, rise in the way and balk us of our best intentions. And the “weaker vessel,” with less strength, less

that he had lived for money, and too much, and it weighed on him him in his last moments. He had hard and unchristian at times with Welsh tenants who rented some li of his in the village, and he felt he acted more up to his preachings more lenient and spared them. Davis, seeing him suffer in the hearing his complaints, learned her father's dying bed which in life was not forgotten. By his ~~h~~ and close life much of her best ~~h~~ of her sympathies, had been ke had no room to play their part; ~~h~~ life had been proved an error; ~~h~~ a woman on whom such a proof sensibly, and work marvels. The of the old Catholic spirit of exp determination to turn that money use; to assist the suffering, th feeble, and no longer pass by o

known Wales or Welsh people, with all her time occupied in the good work before her. And Bessy and Mrs. Wessinger were trusty *aides-de-camp*, whose London experience could point out the really deserving, and whose hearts were warm enough to assist her in a variety of ways ; and the Reverend Jacob Parslow, though he objected to Methodists as a class, was frequent in his visits to Miss Davis, having his own suggestions to make, his own deserving objects of compassion to introduce to this ministering woman.

“ And what do you think of her, sir ? ” said Mrs. Wessinger one day to him. “ Isn’t she an angel, and too good for this world ? ”

“ One in a thousand, at least—we can say that, Mrs. Wessinger, ” replied the incumbent of St. Owen’s.

“ And she’s a Methody, too.”

“ I don’t know that, Mrs. W., ” said Mr. Parslow ; “ she has been brought up by a Methodist father, and attends a Methodist

chapel, but I can hardly fancy her a Methodist myself. Not that the Methodists are anything but a worthy sect, take them all together—a little narrow in their views, that is all."

"If she only belonged to the Church, sir!"

"She does."

Mrs. Wessinger looked at Mr. Parslow for an explanation.

"To the same church as myself, Mrs. Wessinger, which is better than High Church or Low Church, chapel-going or open-air preaching—which is the one and the true, and that's Broad Church."

"Ah! how nicely he always brings it round, now!" said Mrs. Wessinger, with a glance at Bessy.

"It is a wide creed, has love and sympathy for all classes, and shuts the door in no one's face—be he Jew or Gentile. It don't seek to reach heaven by singing, intoning, or high mass—and its worshippers are from all churches,



and of all degrees of life. There are not many of us yet, Mrs. W.; but our numbers are increasing, and, with God's help, will increase, till there is peace on earth and fellowship with all men. The barriers between our pride and prejudice are growing weaker every day; and there will come a time—if neither you nor I should live to see it—when its followers will be legion, and all the pomps and vanities and prejudices that pollute the sanctuary be as far removed from actual, working religious life, as the racks and thumbscrews that tried to force a creed in Mary's time."

There had been a listener by the door, who now came forward with a heightened colour.

"Such a Church as that I hope to belong to some day."

"Well spoken, Hugh Speckland. We shall make a man of you yet."

Hugh had called to take Bessy for a little

quiet evening stroll ; and Bessy, in a flutter of confusion and happiness, was soon on his arm, listening to that constant topic of his, which always alluded to the 22nd of April, 18—. Let them talk of Mr. Parslow, or Mary Davis, or Stephen, or anything, and that one subject always swerved round, upon which Hugh could grow most eloquent.

Another stroke of fortune had descended on Hugh that particular day he called at St. Owen's Terrace, and he had arrived to communicate the good tidings to his betrothed. His engraving and his sketches had attracted more than common attention of late, and more than one illustrated paper had lately solicited his services, and offered him terms which enabled him to lay by money more easily.

“ It is all through going to church,” said the enthusiastic Bessy.

“ Or practising my hardest, even on Sundays,” added Hugh, drily.

"Oh ! you don't think that ? "

"Perhaps you bring good luck with you, Bessy," said he, pressing her arm to his side ; "I am inclined to think *that* the true secret of Hugh Speckland's success. You have brought me a better temper, a purer heart, a host of brighter thoughts—why should I not attribute the little fame I am making to you ? "

Hugh was in one of his best humours, or he would not have been so complimentary, or had such faith in the truth of his compliments.

Those were pleasant courting days of Hugh Speckland ; they were a fair retrospect to Bessy in the future days when her heart was heavier, albeit there was a dark side to it—for bitter memories are ever attached to dreams that have vanished.

Hugh came every evening to St. Owen's Terrace to take Bessy Calverton for a little walk after sundown and business hours ; and though they were a humble couple enough—

e  
NO CHURCH.

... eader by this time has discovered that  
... the best deal in fine heroes and heroines; in  
... fact, they are fast becoming most unsaleable  
... articles!—and albeit their walks were confi-  
... ned to the London streets, or the bridges;  
... still, they were as happy in their humble,  
... quiet way, as couples of a higher rank, who  
... have parks to wander through, and talk love  
... matters in, and who talk them, too, in the  
... grandest of English, with never a word of  
... less size than three syllables—that is, if Lady  
... Amelia Gushington's novels are standards of  
... aristocratical conduct.

Hugh talked of Mr. Parslow a great deal  
on that night, wherein he had listened to his  
broad-church doctrines, and confessed that the  
reverend gentleman had risen several degrees  
in his estimation.

“I had always set him down for a narrow-  
minded bigot, hemmed in by class distinctions;  
I have a better opinion of Mr. Parslow from  
to-night. We will be married in St. Owen's

church, Bessy, and Mr. Parslow shall be the officiating clergyman."

" And you and I will be regular members of his congregation, Hugh ? "

" Some day, perhaps, when he preaches broad-church doctrine, as well as talks of it in private life. Will you tell me a little more of Miss Davis ?—don't be jealous, but I am interested in that young lady."

Bessy spoke of Mary Davis forthwith ; of the great task she had set herself to befriend the poor, and sustain, by kind words, and helping hands—so far as lay in her power—the sick and suffering who struggle against despair in the stifling London streets.

" Do you know, Bessy, that has been a wild visionary dream of mine, in which Miss Davis has obtained the start of me. For two years I have had the idea constantly before me, that with means at command, and with my experience of the real, deserving poor, I might rescue many honest souls from the

toils that encircle them at such times as you and I were witness to last winter. For the real and the false poor are hard to distinguish ; I have known a man starve to death and complain not, and I have been offered three coal-tickets for as many glasses of gin, from a pale-faced trollop, whose wan face was her fortune.”

Meanwhile, Mrs. Wessinger, whose knowledge of the true poor was as great as Hugh’s, and had been bought with harder experience, after consulting with Mary Davis and Mr. Parslow concerning the names on their relief-list—after the departure of Mr. Parslow also—asked the rather direct question, as to what Miss Davis thought of the reverend gentleman.

“A good and worthy man,” was the reply.

“And that is your true opinion ?”

“How could I think otherwise—are not his actions good and worthy, and do not they speak for themselves ?”

"I always intended, if you know, that Methodists were rather bad members of the Church of England," observed Mrs. Wessinger; "but you are badly a Methodist."

"Oh! yes, I am," said Mary Davis, pride of her sect.

"Ah! Mr. Passow hates it—he says you belong to broad-church, like himself."

"Broad-church?" repeated Mary Davis. "that means—oh, I see what it means now. Yes, I hope so."

"He's the dearest man under the sun—so gentle, and not one awfully yes."

"Yes," answered Mary Davis, absentmindedly stirring the fire.

"It's a-coming!" cried Mrs. Wessinger, with a precipitancy that nearly startled the poker out of Mary Davis's hand.

"What is?" she inquired.

"Only a little idea of mine—something that is to happen in a year or two."

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof!" quoted Miss Davis.

“Ah!—but not the good. It is comfortable to think of things happening just as they ought to happen—aint it?”

“Yes—but it is folly to build upon them. Don’t be too sanguine, Mrs. Wessinger.”

“Well, I’ll try not,” was the reply. “I’ll get a bit of needle-work and distract my ideas. My right arm does ache for the want of something to do—sure-ly!”

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TIDE TURNS.

A GOOD woman is soon known in a poor neighbourhood, however narrow her means, or extensive the size of that parish in which those means are diffused. Mary Davis was not long in discovering that a thousand such fortunes as her's would, at times and seasons when disease and want were paramount, be as the dew-drop to the wide ocean. She found the claimants many at her gates, and the interest on her mining shares, and bank stock speedily running low ; and nearly six months to wait before those pleasant things called dividends

NO CHURCH.

now towardsh her again. In her enthusiasm she had possibly been a trifle improvident, and she set herself to repair that task, and exercise a little more discretion in the distribution of the few pounds remaining from her reserve fund. It was summer now, and Whitechapel was holding up its head again, and most of its denizens in full work. Mary Davis's advice would effect as much good as her money now, and she was anxious to inculcate, in those who had been the recipients of her bounty, habits of providence and forethought. That was a harder task than she had imagined; these people she had studied were of the class that took no heed for the morrow in its literal sense, and lived in the present, and let not the shadow of the winter, which always tried them more or less, cross their thoughts and disturb them. They had just escaped one severe season, let them have the little enjoyment which the summer afforded, and not annoy them by talking of savings banks, and

the rainy day that might come when they were dead, for what they knew of the matter. Let them have fresh air, and excursions by spring van and railway train on Sundays and Mondays occasionally ; let them spend the money which they had honestly earned—next winter they might be lucky enough to keep in work ; and if it were a hard winter, why, so had been the last, and they had fought through it somehow ! They would hear her read the bible in their houses, and to their sick wives and children ; a few of them, touched by her earnest persuasions, would venture to a church at times ; but they would *not* save their money—it was a harder task than working for it.

Nevertheless, Mary Davis felt that a certain amount of good had followed her appearance in the parish, and hers was a nature that did not flinch before a danger or difficulty. In her noble labours she was encouraged by seeing here and there a fair result, and she had

not hoped to have it all her own way in the midst of a troubled world.

Meanwhile, Hugh Speckland and Bessy took longer walks together now the days had lengthened, although the time seemed to pass more rapidly than in those short winter evenings before Bessy had her lesson by heart. Mary Davis was pleased with her cousin's choice, too, and that rendered affairs still more satisfactory. "He's a steady, saving young man, and will do well," said Mary to Bessy one day after they had canvassed his merits together. "I am glad your choice has been a good one, Bessy; for at your age young girls are generally inclined to accept the most objectionable offer. He is a good temper, I think?"

Bessy thought her cousin should have seen him in the early days, before he gave signs of his love, and when his father was harassing him with his eternal complaints.

"A good temper," observed Bessy, how-

ever ; “a little hasty at times, but generally warm in defence of a right, or in the attack of a wrong.”

“ I daresay he has his faults, like other people,” remarked Mary Davis ; “ but I think you will be happy with him, Bessy. He will make you a better husband than he whom I imagined for a moment was the object of your attachment.”

Bessy might think so, too, although she did not reply to the observation.

“ He will have a will of his own all his life, and a man with a will is the best for us weak women, after all. His brother Stephen, whom I set down to you, Bessy, is of a good-tempered and affectionate disposition, I should say, but lacking that strength of mind which is woman’s support, however much at times she may think to the contrary.”

Mary Davis, who had been busy with her needle during the dialogue, suddenly paused in her work, and looked intently before her.

Talking of Stephen Speckland had perhaps conjured up the faintest of dreams that she had had once, when Bessy was a little girl, and Stephen Speckland had wandered to Aberogwin, and brightened by his genial presence the cottage up the mountain side. It was well for her perhaps that he went away so soon, and that her early training had been strict. She had been taught to master her emotions all her life, and keep down all thoughts verging on romance; and the waters had flowed on peacefully after his departure, and the little fancy that had risen in her heart was dropped to the bottom of it, and never an one the wiser. Her's was a quiet life, that made no sign; she bore her trials uncomplainingly, and faltered not in her way. She could look back at it all now without a pang, and think it was a strange illusion, and wonder how by a thought she had been ever led to encourage it. Only unhappiness could have followed any closer relations between her

and Hugh Speckland's brother : it was all for the best that it had happened otherwise. And though Mary Davis would not have accepted Stephen Speckland had he offered himself to-morrow, yet she sighed—for it is pleasant to be loved, and Mary Davis was a young woman still.

Bessy Calverton had reason to be alarmed that day concerning Stephen Speckland when she repaired to Seymour Street that afternoon to see Lucy. She and Lucy were of course the best of friends, and Lucy looked forward to those visits, when she could have Bessy all to herself, and talk of her Harry, still working for her, and faithful, and keeping the one romance of her life alive—an antithesis to that romance of Mary Davis's, that had met its death so early.

In these visits Hugh was left to himself in the parlour, and only tolerated at tea-time, or when it was necessary to see Bessy safe home to Whitechapel. He would have neglected

his work now for Bessy's sake, had Bessy not been firm and reproached him with becoming dissolute in his habits, and losing that old energy that kept home together when remuneration was below *par*. Hugh was saving money for a new home and an extravagant wife, she told him; and with a smile at her sauciness he would turn to his work and leave her and Lucy together.

Stephen Speckland had been so seldom at home of late that Bessy was surprised to find him that particular afternoon in question lying on the old sofa under the window, looking very pale and ill.

“Ah! Bessy,” said he, as she entered and kissed Lucy; “knocked over again for a little while you see. Pains in the side, and a short allowance of breath, and a cough that gets the mastery over me now and then—nothing alarming, don't look so frightened. Hugh has been foolish enough to leave his engraving and start in search of a doctor—as if I

wanted a doctor, or one could do me any good."

"It is nothing serious, I hope."

"Serious—no," was the reply; "am I looking at my last gasp, Bessy Calverton?"

He exhibited a little petulance as he asked this question, Bessy thought; but it was gone in an instant, and left no trace visible.

"You must have another holiday when the theatre shuts, Stevie," said his sister; "go down and see father and mother in the country."

"Ah!—perhaps," was the evasive reply.

"You are fond of the country, Stephen," said Bessy; "at least you were."

"Once upon a time, as your fairy-book said," replied Stephen; "have I not always maintained Wales was my one holiday? Here are Hugh and the doctor—now for a thousand questions to worry me into fever-heat."

Bessy and Lucy went upstairs to talk over the matter of Stephen's illness—it was a subject that dismissed that of the eternal Harry for a little while.

"It comes so suddenly," said Lucy; "he seems to bear up, and hide all sign of it as long as his strength will allow, and then he gives way all at once and frightens us. Poor Stevie will be no better, I fear, until he takes me to Canada. He has made up his mind to do that when Harry writes for me. Do you know," she added, after a pause, "I believe at times that he has something on his mind—he has lost so much of his good-temper, and copies so much Hugh's old reserved manners."

They were talking of him still when the doctor went away, and Lucy's more than usual anxiety made Bessy nervous. Much of her old interest in Stephen Speckland revived as she listened: Stephen was her first friend, and the thought of danger to him

affected her strangely. And he *was* altered ; when she went down into the parlour at last she shuddered at the contrast presented between the Welsh times and the present—he was but the shadow of his old self now !

Hugh and Stephen were deep in argument when Bessy entered the parlour.

“ I tell you I am well enough,” Stephen was saying ; “ and there is no occasion, Hugh, to neglect business for my sake. Do you think I require as much amusing as our poor old father ? ”

“ You are dull to-day, Stevie.”

“ Not a bit, upon my honour,” was the answer ; “ what can I do to prove myself in the best of spirits ? ”

“ Do nothing—but keep still.”

“ I shall jump off the sofa and fly into one of your old passions if you neglect that appointment,” said Stephen—“ if you treat me like a baby, and think I cannot be left alone

without falling out of my cradle, and damaging myself somehow. I consider there is another lift in life for you if this magazine starts."

"Possibly."

"Then don't neglect it—you may have a bad-tempered brother to keep, if his strength return not in a hurry. Am I so very ill, that you are afraid to leave me with two women in the house?"

"No," returned Hugh; "but you are low spirited, and Stevie Speckland in bad spirits is a bad sign."

"Have I not denied it, upon my honour?" he reiterated. "Hugh, I'm going to sing a comic song!"

"Don't be foolish. I'm off after this appointment. Bessy," to our heroine, "talk to this refractory young gentleman till my return. I shall not be long."

When Hugh was at the street door, Bessy hastily joined him. He was leaving

with a very thoughtful countenance, when Bessy laid her hand upon his arm and looked up at him.

“Hugh, there is nothing serious to be anticipated—is there?”

“God forbid, Bessy.”

“What has the doctor said?”

“Nothing particular—he has no great faith in Stephen’s constitution, and he has evaded, after the old fashion, a direct answer to a plain question. Still—there *is* hope.”

“Has there been a doubt of it?” cried Bessy, alarmed.

“Yes, more than once. But the last physician who saw him said his health would vary a great deal, and that there was no danger—and I have faith in him still. Good-bye, Bessy—talk to him of Wales; it is one of his pleasant memories. I hope to find a great change when I return.”

And he went away, little dreaming of the great change in himself, and in the lives of

those he loved, that was so very close at hand !

When Bessy returned to the parlour she found, to her surprise, that Stephen was standing by the window, intently inspecting his brother's work.

“ Oh ! is not this wrong of you ? ” she asked.

“ Not that I am aware of,” he said, with the return of his old laugh ; “ only Hugh harasses himself and me, till I lie in state on the sofa to oblige him. As if I wanted rest, or cared for it ! That brother of mine has lost all his old nerve, now his heart has softened. Are you a judge of engraving, Bessy ? ”

“ A very poor one, I am afraid.”

“ You are not aware that you are to be the future wife of a genius, then—of one who will take higher rank yet than most of his friends give him credit for. His should be a bright future,” he said, musingly—“ and God bless the old fellow—he deserves it ! ”

Stephen spoke with some difficulty, and put his hand to his side. The action did not escape Bessy, who suggested that he should lie down again. But Stephen was obstinate, and had a will of his own as well as brother Hugh.

“I hate to look like a sick monkey, Bessy—to be wholly conquered by the powers that battle with my strength. I was talking of Hugh ?”

“Yes.”

“You are not anxious to shun the topic, Bessy ?”

“Why should I shun it ?” rejoined Bessy.

“I don’t know,” he answered ; “for no reason that I can see or explain. Concerning this Hugh then, and all the change that has come over him—was I not right in my prophecy ?”

“Yes, Stephen.”

“Was I not right too in that advice which I gave you a few months ago ?” said he ;

“have you ever had reason to regret the engagement which dated from that day?”

“I have never regretted it, Stephen,” replied Bessy; “he has been all that is good and kind.”

“He will make the best of husbands—and you the best and gentlest of wives,” said Stephen. “Let me live to see the day that unites you, and I have played my part out, and Fate may drop the curtain, when it likes.”

Bessy looked intently at Stephen. He was regarding Hugh’s work beneath his hand still, but his thoughts had travelled very far away.

“You must not talk so gloomily, Stephen—it is unlike You,” said Bessy; “you must draw the picture in brighter colours, and let no dark curtain fall between you and the prospect.”

“I might wish to watch the progress of your married life—to see Hugh gathering more fame, and growing more happy every

day—to have your children dancing round me, perhaps; but Bessy—it is marked out otherwise."

Bessy felt her heart sink. Looking into those eyes strangely mournful and expressive, that were turned towards her, she could believe it for the first time.

"Oh! don't say that," she murmured.

"I have been making up my mind to tell some one the secret I have kept for a long while to myself," he continued; "and I fancy, Bessy, you are the best confidant to choose. You know them all so well now, and can prepare them for it better than I, and save me so much pain. With time before you—you can think of all that is best to console Hugh and—and the rest of them. With you at the side of that old friend and truest of brothers, he may not miss me much after the first shock is over. For old Hugh will feel the shock—we have been together so long!"

“ I had intended to keep this a secret to the last,” he said—“ to have died and made no sign ; but I have been rash and betrayed myself. Well, is there any harm, now you love Hugh Speckland, and are to be his wife—now I am standing apart, as it were, with all my interest in worldly cares dying away ? It is all over now ; and yours is a new life, and—and—” he said, tightening his clasp on the hands that were still confidently in his—“ and I did love you, Bessy, with all a strong man’s love ! ”

He would not say he loved her then—would love her to the last, with that intensity and purity that had ever made him shun linking his destiny with hers.

“ I knew it ! ” murmured Bessy.

His hands dropped suddenly to his side, and Bessy felt her own heart sink to a lower depth as she looked up and saw Hugh Speckland standing by the door, a stern, white-faced witness of their interview. Her con-

science did not accuse her: in that heart she knew that Hugh lived there, and held now the foremost place; but still it sank, for Hugh had changed so suddenly, and the face was darker and more full of anger than she had known it at its worst.

“Have you finished?” he asked, hoarsely, when his presence was observed for the first time; “or shall I retire, and allow this sentimental dialogue to end in a more natural manner?”

“Hugh—Hugh!” said Stephen, reproachfully.

“I fear my return for a missing sketch has been most inopportune—let me offer my excuses and begone.”

“Not till you have heard me, sir,” said his brother, firmly.

“I am anxious to hear all, and end all,” he said, between his closed teeth.

“Not in anger, Hugh,” said Stephen—“not with the ruling passion gaining the

mastery over you, and blinding you to justice?"

"Well, well—I will be calm," said he—"I am calm."

"Bessy, will you leave us for a moment?"

Hugh stepped aside to allow Bessy to proceed to Lucy's room. She looked towards him as she passed, but he kept his dark eyes directed downwards. He maintained that same brooding position long after Bessy had left him, and was sobbing her story forth on Lucy's bosom ; and Stephen, who watched him at a little distance, did not intrude upon those thoughts, which he believed would at least bring calmness in discussion. And the signs of anger died out from that darkling countenance, although the shadows settled there as though they would never leave it till his dying day. He closed the door, and advanced into the room, and placed two chairs close to where Bessy and Stephen had been standing.

“Sit down, Stephen; you are not strong.”

When they were seated, Hugh said—

“I have been hasty—I have been wrong.”

“Well said.”

“One moment,” he added, quickly—  
“hasty in my remarks, not in my judgment. You, at least, are suffering and ill, and I will spare you my comments—forgive you all the evil you have strewn around me, in your narrow estimate of what was best for me. I have not heard much of the conversation between you and Miss Calverton—I have no desire to hear more.”

“Uncharitable and inconsiderate.”

“All is plain as noonday to me, Stephen. I do not reproach you—I will even thank you for your best intentions. But your scheme for my happiness was a false one, and it crumbles away to dust, and leaves a sterner future than before. So be it—man is born to trouble.”

“Will you let me speak!” cried Stephen, excitedly—“I must speak!”

“By heaven, I will not hear you!” exclaimed Hugh, his hand falling heavily on the table.

“By heaven, you shall!” and Stephen’s hand followed that of Hugh’s, and Stephen’s eyes glared, perhaps for the first time in his life, a defiance to that brother’s will. “Would you judge a case without listening to the truth—or are you a coward, and would shun it?”

Hugh hesitated a moment; then he folded his arms on his broad chest, and said—

“Speak, then; I am a patient listener.”

Stephen, as briefly as he could, and in nervous earnest language, related the story of his love for Bessy, his struggle with it, his final triumph over the passion that had at one time nearly mastered him. He did not dwell upon his desire to see that brother before him more happy than himself; he simply told his own story, and how it had ended, and been kept

back even from Bessy until that present hour.

“Setting aside the folly of confessing all to Bessy in a weak moment, there is nothing of which I blame myself, or of which you can accuse me.”

“I accuse you not,” he said, regarding his brother mournfully; “yours has been a harder life than mine, Stephen; but you have groped on blindly, and dragged me to the gulf with you. I have only to see Bessy now—another dreamer like ourselves ! ”

“You will remember she loves you—you will be careful, Hugh.”

“I will not wound her by a harsh word, Stephen.”

Stephen seized his hand and pressed it, but Hugh responded not, and the cloud was still upon his face.

“Hugh, for her sake and mine, do not resolve hastily.”

“I have resolved,” was the hollow answer; “there is no changing me.”

“What! will you throw away your happiness like a madman?”

“Like a wise man, who has found the semblance of happiness, not the substance, and wakes up to the truth.”

“The substance is with you. You will be the destroyer of your best days if you are deaf to reason now.”

“I have been deceived! Mask the truth as you may, produce as many extenuating circumstances as possible, it is a grim truth, from which there is no escape. I accuse no one, but I am firm.”

“Will you not think of Bessy’s happiness as well as your own?”

“I will act for the best. Will you,” he said, with a strange appealing look on his face,—“will you let me think a little while?”

He leaned his elbows on his knees, and took his head between his hands, and was silent; and his brother, anxiously watching him, had not the heart to break upon his thoughts.

Stephen did not remember how very weak and ill he had been that day till the excitement of the last hour having partly subsided, he could feel a greater weakness stealing over him. He crossed the room, and dropped to his old place on the sofa, whence he watched the figure of his brother, so still and rigid, and yet expressive of so much despair. He knew Hugh's love-dream would all vanish now, and that no power of his could stay it; he felt assured the end for which he himself had striven, and had sacrificed so much, was shattered in a moment, never to be replaced and gather strength again!

## CHAPTER V.

## DISUNION.

HUGH looked up at last, and there was nothing to hope in his face. It was the old face of a past time, before Bessy Calverton was known to him ; all its new brightness had vanished away as though it had never been.

He glanced towards his brother, and said—

“ Don’t you feel so well, Stephen ? ”

“ About the same, thank you.”

“ I have been forgetful of you and your weakness—you must overlook it for this once.

There are times when we forget everything but the one crushing fact that has numbed our interest in passing things. Keep quiet."

"And let me be quiet," he might have added, as he turned to his work, and sat down to his old place by the window. It required an exercise of all his firm will to begin every-day life again; but he brought it to subjection, and no one but himself ever knew the struggle it was. Bessy and Lucy came down together at a later hour, and he bent more closely over his work as the door opened and admitted them. He had been accustomed of late to look up when Bessy entered the room, and by the studied intentness with which he prosecuted his work, Bessy knew he had not forgiven her. He had said a little while ago that he never forgave an injury, and he had taken her interest in Stephen as an injury to himself, that no love of hers could extenuate. Bessy Calverton had not lost all her high spirit, and her cheek flushed

and her bosom heaved at these thoughts. Her first impulse was to return home at once ; then a second thought taught her discretion. If all were over between her and Hugh Speckland, why, it was better to part with some semblance of good will ; and perhaps her actions were not wholly right, and she had deceived him a little. But she had striven hard to make amends, and been rewarded by his better life and her own lighter heart ; and now it was all dashed down, and the shadows were deepening as she sat there.

Yes, she must go home. It was an unnatural position for her, and the blind girl's faint attempts to relieve the depression that had settled on them only made things worse. Sitting there amidst the wreck of so many best intentions, was a mockery to her woman's feelings. She would be glad to depart, and think it all over in the solitude of her chamber, and wrestle with the bitter knowledge.

She was ready to leave an instant afterwards, and to Lucy's faint appeal not to go away so soon was answering with a lip that quivered in spite of her. Would it be the last time, she thought, as she kissed Lucy passionately, that she should stand within that room, and be face to face with all those who had made it like home to her? She could believe it in that moment. She shook hands with Stephen, who held her hand for a moment in his, and said,

“For all the harm I have done, Bessy; may I ask your pardon?”

“There is nothing to forgive, Stephen. What has happened was God's will. Good-bye.”

“God bless you,” he murmured.

As Bessy turned, she became aware that Hugh had left his seat, and was awaiting her, hat in hand. It was no surprise; she felt that the engagement between them must be broken formally; and though she inwardly

feared him, and distrusted her own calmness, it was right that his cold words should end it.

“I am going a little way home with Bessy,” Hugh said in answer to a glance from Stephen.

“Take care of her,” was the low response.

“You will——” began Lucy more passionately, when he interrupted her by saying, “I will not be late—*fear nothing.*”

Deep as his voice was, there was more mournfulness than harshness in its tone, and Bessy felt they would not part in anger.

They went together from the house, and walked the whole dreary length of Seymour Street without a word being exchanged between them. He had offered her his arm, and she had taken it, as if their old relationship existed still, and then they proceeded silently into the broader thoroughfares, where more hearts and hopes were failing than their own.

“Bessy,” he said at length, “I have no

long speeches to offer, no reproaches to make; to be very brief is better for us both. I have been a visionary, and shown myself, with all my boasted strength of mind, no better than the weakest and most foolish. I have been deceived in myself and my worldly knowledge rather than in you. For you were a child—you are a child now, and I am a strong man, who should have read you differently: it is all my fault."

Bessy tried to answer, but her voice failed her. The strange mournful cadence ringing throughout his words affected her, despite the efforts she had resolved upon to keep firm to the end. She had not expected that he would talk or reason thus, after all that she had seen and heard that afternoon. His cruel sarcasm had been ringing in her ears till then, but this touched her heart and moved her. And yet this told of a purpose there was no power to move.

"It is all my fault," he repeated; "I

stepped from the life I knew into a crowd of foolish romantic thoughts, that would have shamed a schoolboy's first love—and I have met my punishment. It may be hard to bear, but I have borne hard truths before, and mastered them—and I will master this! Bessy," he said in a lower tone, as the crowd swept by them. "I was too many years your senior, too far removed in thoughts and pursuits, ever to have made you happy—I think we have both been a little wrong in suffering the engagement, but I take the blame for forcing it upon you. All I ask you, is to bear in mind that I had not the power to read until to-day that story of your love for Stevie."

"No, no!" cried Bessy; and then stopped and struggled with her emotion, and drew her thick veil before her face.

"Why deny it at this moment—at this time? Does it matter to me or you now?—can it influence, for an instant, the after-life

of either of us? We are parting—we must part!—why should there be a screen between you and me at such a crisis in our fates? Bessy, will you answer me one question fairly—by all that truth in your heart which you possess, I beg it of you."

"I will answer it," said Bessy.

"Did you love Stephen Speckland on that Sunday evening I asked you for my wife?"

It was a cruel question, and struck home. It was a question from which there was no escape—and, even if she had wished it, no evasion. Oh! if he had only asked her at that time and hour, if she loved Stephen Speckland now!

He repeated the question, and she answered, "Yes." He had sought the truth; and though it quivered like an arrow in him, he kept firm, and the expression on his face did not waver for an instant.

"I was assured of it—and he loved you, and, doubtful of his future health, disguised

it till this afternoon. Well, Bessy, thinking it all over now, I see how natural it was, and how wilfully blind *I* have been. Wrapped in my egotism, I left you and him together, and then expected to be loved myself—to ask and have, and never a disappointment in my path to check me. I have merited justly such a day as this!"

"No," said Bessy, firmly, "for you were truthful, Hugh, and I was wrong. I should have waited till the time when I could have answered honestly and from the heart."

"The answer must have been 'No' then—we were so unfitted for each other, and the dissimilarity between us would have suggested itself each day with greater force. It would have been better, however—I see all that, I feel all that. You would not have had the hard task to strive to love me—even to bewilder yourself between a fancied love and common friendship; whilst I—ah! no matter that—all's over!"

And Bessy Calverton felt how true it was ; that there was no power, no unmaidenly effort of her own, which could change the line of action he had sternly drawn for both. He would not ask then if she loved him ; he would not believe in her, or her affection ; he set it all aside as beyond question—and her woman's pride resisted her impulse to explain. And had she even explained, he would have crushed her with his disbelief, perhaps.

“ May I ask one more question—the last ? ”

Bessy did not answer, but he took her silence for consent.

“ I would wish to know why at that time, when you loved Stephen, when you secretly believed he loved you—your own words confessed that this afternoon !—you accepted me for your future husband, and cast away every hope of your young life ? ”

“ Is it necessary to dwell upon this now ? ” asked Bessy, a little indignantly.

“ I am in the dark—I cannot reconcile the

answer of that morning with the actions of your life—I am very anxious to know all before I go."

"Your brother Stephen pressed me to an answer at once—for the sake of your future happiness, he begged me to say 'Yes.' He spoke of—of—"

"Enough, Bessy, I am satisfied," he said, quickly; "let me not add to the pain of that avowal by listening to another word. I forgive him all the harm he has done in his efforts to bring happiness to me. He was never a thoughtful man, or he might have looked forward to the natural end of such a scheme, and seen the day when it must crumble into dust. It was all based on a lie, and deserved to fall!"

It was Hugh Speckland's one reproach, though he had promised not to hurl it against her. He did not know then that he had uttered a reproach; for in that moment he was but thinking of the cruel waters that had

closed round him, and left him alone on the rock.

They were in St. Owen's parish then, and advancing to Miss Davis's. Bessy felt her strength failing her, and envied the firm unfaltering step of him at her side. Nothing would alter him she thought, not even the pang of that separation which must ensue now, and end all. He would have marched like that to his grave, had it been dug at the end of the street, and made no sign. It was better that they should part thus; with so cold and unforgiving a nature she would have been never happy—he was right! They were at St. Owen's Church at last, where he stopped and let her hand withdraw itself from his arm.

“I will leave you here,” he said. “I fear I have prolonged your pain as well as my own by accompanying you so far—but it is our last walk together, and there must be no ill feeling at our parting. Let me say once

more—for the last time in life that we may ever meet, Miss Calverton—that I take all the blame upon myself, and that I claim it as my right. Good-bye."

He extended his hand, and regarded her intently. His face changed then for a moment, but Bessy was looking at the pavement at her feet, and observed it not. She only heard the deep unwavering voice addressing her, as he held her hand firmly in his own.

"In all your after life may God's blessing follow you," he said, "and make that life brighter and more fair than any effort of mine could have done. Good-bye—I am not rash enough to say for ever, although I honestly believe that we shall never meet from this day."

He reiterated his good-bye, released her hand, turned away, and went rapidly down the street, without looking once back at all the hopes he had quitted. He crossed the road and plunged into the maze of streets before

him, and went on at an increased rate in the direction of his home, as though he could outwalk all the troubles that crowded on him, and all the whispers in his ear of what might have been, of what could never be again. He had performed his duty, and cut himself adrift from the ties that bound him to her; he was alone now, free to act, and to strike out a new path for himself. It would not lead to happiness; he had done with the search from that hour, and no visions could live after the waking—from that day never more a dreamer!

As he hurried on through the streets amidst the crowd of workers like himself—many of whom had cares like unto his, and many more deep and self-engrossing, and bore them better and with a philosophy more pure—they were not few in number who looked into his face, and turned to watch him as he hastened on. For it was a face that betrayed its owner was ill at ease by that stern set expression which he

considered surmounted all emotion, and made a man of him. There were gathered many idlers on London Bridge, watching the departure of a steam-ship below, and, his progress impeded, he mingled with the mass and found himself after a time looking over the parapet and watching with the rest. He did not know why he had paused—whether the thoughts of the busy day had been too much for him, and brought him to a stand-still. He might have been walking in his sleep for the notice he had taken of events ; and his thoughts were so vague and confused still, that he could hardly believe himself a conscious being like those who stood beside him. He remembered a man speaking to him once or twice, and his returning a few unmeaning words for answer ; and he had a vague sense of wishing that he were utterly alone in the world, that he might step on board that ship, and be borne with her to another land, where he might begin life afresh. And then he

forgot all about the vessel and his propinquity to a few suspicious characters, and played again the cruel part he had resolved upon, and parted with Bessy Calverton, and muttered his last blessing again so loudly, that his neighbour looked from under his hat at him, and gave a wink to a friend, significant of Hugh's mental condition. The steam-ship went on her way, the crowd dispersed in that mysterious, magical way common to all crowds, and Hugh Speckland still stood there, and watched the water flowing through the arches, and the black night deepening upon its surface, and the faint lights coming out on board ship and from warehouse floors, and shimmering in the restless water.

Deep and soul-oppressing thoughts, from which he finally broke away, to find the night had come upon him, and that some one had stolen his handkerchief and a pocket-book, in which were a few of his best sketches; and that a policeman, puzzled at his long stay

there, was suspiciously regarding him. He started once more at the old quick pace, and stopped not till he reached Snowfields.

He entered his home by his latch-key, after pausing for a moment at the door ; and, after one glance towards Stephen on the couch, and to Lucy sitting by his side, he walked straight to his bench, and plunged at once into his work. And those who watched him thought how like it was to the past habits, before he had known Bessy Calverton ; and felt that that past life, with all the old thoughts belonging to it, had come back once again.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE LAST MEETING.

BESSY went direct to her room, and closed the door upon herself and her troubles. She had borne up well whilst the eyes of the world were upon her; she could afford to give way now the world was locked out, and only the eye of God could take note of her sorrows. She felt that she had loved Hugh Speckland then, and that he, in his selfish obduracy, which would not believe in future happiness, had cast her aside, coolly and phlegmatically, and thrust the best feelings of her heart back upon herself.

He had never truly loved, or he would have acted in a different manner, she thought; let it end as he wished it, and let her turn to new thoughts and pursuits also, and forget him. He had been too old for her, and she was little more than a girl even now—scarcely nineteen years of age. How could she have expected to make such a man as Hugh Speckland contented with her? It was a whim—a phantasy, that such men as he encourage for a time, and then shake off. Why should she feel more than himself? He had owned, if not directly, still by words which implied that truth, that his confidence was shaken, and he would prefer his life alone: so be it, she thought, dashing the tears from her eyes with a hasty hand; she could bear it, and not give way too much. There would lie duties before her to distract her thoughts, and keep her from brooding too much on the irreparable; a deeper study of lives more wretched than her own would keep the cruel past in

the background, and teach her to forget the follies and wrongs that belonged to it. And then those last words of Hugh rang in her ears again—"It was all based on a lie, and deserved to fall." They were accusing words, that struck home, and she could not shut them from her.

And whilst prostrated by this thought, Mrs. Wessinger, after trying the handle of the door, called her name from without. Bessy rose and opened the door, and Mrs. Wessinger stood there gazing with no small degree of amazement on the pale, tear-stained face of our heroine.

"My dear Bessy, what's the matter?" she exclaimed; "what has gone wrong, my child, since you and I saw each other last?"

"Cannot you guess?" she said.

"Hugh Speckland?" cried the old lady.

"Yes. Between Hugh Speckland and me has ended all engagement. We were not fitted for each other, and we are better apart,

he thinks. Oh! my faithful, best of friends, who has been the comforter of so many troubled ones, will you comfort me now in my turn, and try to make me think as he does?"

She flung herself into Mrs. Wessinger's arms, and they folded round her and pressed her to her breast, as they would have folded round that daughter of hers who had died early and left her childless, and in whom this Bessy seemed to live again.

"But will you think so?"

"Yes—soon!"

"If he were the first to say so, it is for the best, my child," said she; "the man is not worthy of you who coolly asserts so much after your engagement. Will you tell your story to me and two old friends downstairs?"

"Is Mr. Parslow here?"

"Yes—he has called to have a quiet cup of tea with us, Bessy. If anyone can give you comfort, teach you resignation, it is he."

But Bessy shrank from the revelation of

her love story. She did not care to enter into all the details of that history, now the book that contained it was sealed for ever. It had been a strange story—let it remain buried deep within her, now no good could arise from its relation.

“No, no,” she hastened to add, “there is no occasion to speak of it. Surely it is enough to know that all is over between me and Hugh, and that a new life begins for both. He is not to blame so much as myself—you must promise me never to seek him out, or utter one reproach to add to a misery that will be ever greater than mine.”

“But—”

“But you will promise—will you not?”

And Mrs. Wessinger promised, and began, after her own homely way, to offer that consolation to Bessy which it was in her power to bestow. And she had a way of speaking that always had some effect—for it was from the heart, and full of faith, and was ruled by

something higher than worldly experience. With a woman's tact she could see that Bessy was suffering, and she did not strive all at once to bring her back to herself, as though a great disappointment could be shaken off like a dewdrop. She preached the homely doctrine of resignation, and trust in the God who in His will was thus testing her, and she had faith in time and Bessy's youth to work the rest.

When they went downstairs Bessy was calm, and it was not till later in the evening that she startled Mary Davis and Mr. Parslow by saying—very hurriedly, for she would not trust herself with the subject —

“I wish you all to know that I am no longer engaged to Mr. Speckland—that we have resolved to put an end to the engagement. I should feel it kind of you if you will both believe that it could not have happened otherwise, and that it has happened now for the best.”

Mr. Parslow looked perplexed, and put the end of his forefinger into his mouth, and slowly nibbled it like a morsel that he was choice of. He observed Bessy's agitation, however, and put on his quiet manner, and passed the matter over lightly enough, for her sake.

“For the best—to be sure, Bessy, who doubts it? The sea is full of fish, and there are more in it than ever came out of it, according to some wise man or other, whose name I don't exactly call to mind at this moment. At nineteen years of age one does not give way to despair over the loss of a sweetheart—only in a trumpery novel that is.”

Mary Davis thought Mr. Parslow treated the matter very lightly; but she did not know Mr. Parslow yet, and was not so shrewd a judge of character as Mrs. Wessinger. She would have liked to dwell upon the subject, and distress Bessy by probing too deeply into

the matter at that moment; and was surprised at the rapid manner with which the reverend gentleman darted away to other topics, chiefly of a light turn, too, and somewhat unbecoming in a minister of the gospel. She did not know, neither did Bessy, nor Mrs. Wessinger, that he left St. Owen's Terrace for Seymour Street, after bidding them good night, and bearded the stern man in his den, and demanded with some warmth an explanation. He found the old Hugh Speckland at his work—the taciturn, irritable man, whom a little annoyed—yet the man of granite, that no earnestness could soften. Hugh dismissed the case in a very few words: he took the blame upon himself, as he had asserted at an earlier hour of that day; but he did not condescend to enlighten Mr. Parslow in any degree whatever.

“I have been mistaken in what I thought was best for her and me—I have awakened to the consciousness that I should have only

made her unhappy, and have considered it my duty to apprise her of it. Have you an objection to urge against that line of conduct?"

"No—no," said the incumbent of St. Owen's, with a little hesitation; "but might you not have thought of this before?"

"I might—but I did not think. My fault again—I own it!"

"And might not some little explanation make matters right?"

"Never, sir!"

"And might not—"

"You distress me with your persistence," cried Hugh; "will you have no mercy on me?"

Mr. Parslow gave up before the fierce glance and the contracted brow, and returned home to think that Bessy Calverton's life had taken another turn, and to wonder perhaps whither in good time it might lead her.

So Hugh Speckland and Bessy Calverton

parted and went their ways, each setting it down for the best that such a separation had ensued, and growing sceptical concerning any true happiness in the world. If it were all for the best, neither seemed to have come forth the better for the trial, but to have lost some faith in human nature, and some belief in human love. Each flew to work as to a distraction wherein might be sunk a harsh remembrance ; and she who, in the common order of things, might have been expected to suffer most, was the first to take heart and learn resignation. For Hugh Speckland belonged to the No-Church class after his disappointment ; he lost all faith in prayer bringing him any good. She whose influence had led him to God's house had betrayed him, and in his bitterness he would hear no comfort from the lips of those who preached the divine laws. He was anxious to make his life the true reflex of what it had been before Bessy's face shone on it and distracted

him ; let him go back to the past, and forget that she had ever played her part there. Yes, she had betrayed him ; in his heart he believed it ; in the solitude of his own chamber he nursed that thought, till it rankled within him and made him uncharitable. He had spared her his reproaches in that last interview between them ; he had promised Stephen so—he had desired it for her own sake—but, nevertheless, she had betrayed him, valued not his love, and returned it by a false show of affection, that made him wince to dwell upon. To the two questions that he had asked her she had answered in a manner unsatisfactory to him and his self-respect, and he brooded upon the result over his work, though her name never again crossed his lips.

The reader perceives that Hugh Speckland is not a model hero—it has never been our intention to present him as such. Model heroes belong not to real life ; and even novels are on the turn, and immaculate characters a

drug in the market. It was Hugh's nature to twist and pervert a subject that he dwelt upon, until it became fixed upon his mind, a distortion in which he read an injury to himself and an offence to his pride. From Stephen, who might have given a different aspect to affairs that troubled him, he would seek no further explanation ; he would frame for himself one of the darkest colours, and set it up for truth, and believe in it. With every day he hardened—it was but the growing weakness of Stephen that touched him now, for it was only in his case that he gave his heart play. The brain and hand worked diligently, and were seldom still ; but the heart, with all its deep feeling, its great thoughts, he kept a weight upon, and would not have it move. It was his study to do that—for the first time in his life it became an especial study.

Perhaps it was wisely ordered that this strange nature should be distracted by his

brother's weakness more and more, and that time, with the memory of his disappointment green, should not be wholly left him to brood on one wrong.

Stephen Speckland had made a struggle to return to business again, and then broken down utterly, and been forbidden night air, or any venturing into the streets, except in the warm sunshine, and with the wind in a fair quarter.

"A child at last, Hugh," he said—"dependent on your bounty, and bound to fifty restrictions, that can only save me a few more days at the best. Well, I can afford to be patient now."

If he were inclined to be dull and abstracted Hugh would detect it on the instant, and set aside his work, and go to him. One day Stephen, observing this alacrity, said—

"I am robbing you of your time, Hugh."

“ Does it matter much, Stevie ? ”

“ You must fetch up after I’m gone, old fellow. There will be only sister Lucy to distract you—and you won’t forget her now and then ? ”

“ No.”

“ I suppose her time will come to leave you too, Hugh,” said he ; “ for we may believe in this Canadian hero, now.”

“ Every day is full of uncertainty, and he is a fool who builds one hope on the morrow.”

“ Still it may occur,” reasoned Stevie ; “ and then,” with an anxious glance towards him, “ you’ll be wholly alone here, Hugh. That is a picture I don’t like to regard very much—for I can’t trust you far.”

“ Am I not fit company for myself—have I not lived in myself for many years ? ”

“ Still, it is a gloomy picture,” mused Stephen ; “ this room, deserted by all the old faces, and you sitting yonder under the lamp

for ever alone, fostering all the evil, unjust thoughts which turn you against your better self."

"A gloomy picture as you draw it, Stevie," said Hugh, forcing a laugh; "neither a bright nor a true one."

"Cannot you manage your work in the country—live with the old people again?"

"They don't understand me—I never made them happy."

"Wrong."

"I was not born to study others' happiness, Stevie—it is my fate, perhaps."

"I wish you would study your own happiness a little more, Hugh," he said, after a long pause; "may I talk of an old subject?"

Hugh looked fixedly at Stephen.

"Of all but one."

"Ah! but it is that one—it never leaves me now. I am haunted by it, as by an evil spirit."

“Exorcise it by prayer,” said Hugh, somewhat scornfully.

“You are your own enemy—you are suffering.”

“Not I.”

“Do you think that I have known you for so many years, that I cannot tell by that face when the heart is troubled?”

“Romance—romance, Stevie,” said Hugh in reply; “I give you my word that my mind is resigned to my future, and that every day I regard it with more composure. Granted that I sketched a fairy picture once with vivid figures in the foreground: the picture is gone—and I am none the worse for having nursed a folly late in life.”

“But Bessy—”

“Stephen,” interrupted Hugh, “that name is the one subject on which I will *not* dwell—for which I pray your forbearance. I cannot hear it, even from you, whose wishes in every other respect I hold sacred, and will obey.”

hastened to qualify his promise.  
“... far as it is possible for my stubborn nature to obey,” he said; “you will not bind me to anything I may blush at as weak and childish?”

“No; but I must see *her* again before—the last! I have resolved upon that. This is your house, and if you refuse me consent, I must drag my way somewhere else.”

“There is room for both of us herein; only—only—she and I must never meet, you understand.”

Stephen nodded his head.

“And when the old people come next week—they are talking of it, I hear”—(he did not tell Stephen that he had sent for them)—“you must not let them, with their want of forethought, pain me, or—her.”

“You may trust me; you may rest assured that she—”

Hugh started up with his old petulance.

“ You will speak of her, and I have said ‘ No’ to it ! Is she a subject of which you will never tire ? ”

“ Never.”

Hugh caught him by the arm, and looked full in his thin, wasted face, wherein the eyes had become so preternaturally large.

“ Stephen, you love her still ! ”

The brother did not answer, but he evaded the glance bent on him.

“ You have loved her through it all—is it not so ? ”

“ Is it worth disguising now ? ” he asked, with a faint smile ; “ will you think worse of me for confessing it ? ”

“ No.”

“ Mine is a strange love—it don’t belong to this world, Hugh. I have nursed it in health and sickness, before and after your engagement : I have kept it pure and free from selfishness. She gladdened this home, and made a change in it—she would have

and made you happy. She

hush—you will speak of her, and  
like a man, who is spell-bound.  
Do you tell me that she loved me, when  
my word is a mockery, that I can dis-  
prove?"

"Impossible."

"Stephen, it will make you happier, per-  
haps, to know that she has been ever  
aware of your passion—and God knows why I  
should begrudge you a happy moment in a  
time like this."

He stooped down and said, in a voice that  
trembled—

"She loved you from the first. She loved  
you on the day she consented to my offer.  
In our last interview on earth it was her con-  
fession, on my honour!"

He crossed the room to his work again,  
after giving voice to that which he believed  
would be a solace to his brother, and



applied himself to his task with all his old energy. It had been a humiliation to confess it, and he was a proud man—but it ended all argument for ever, and it would make his brother happy. But he was wrong there ; it but added to that brother's trouble—for he saw, from the graver complication existing, the utter impossibility of linking Bessy's life with Hugh's.

Before his last resolve to give her up even in thought, Stephen had believed that Bessy loved him ; but he had not sought the knowledge, and would have given worlds not to have known it in his dying hours. It distressed him—it show'd before him all that might have been had life and health been spared him. And he had been trying to undervalue life, and been long reconciled, as he had thought, to resigning it.

“ Hugh,” he said at last.

“ I will talk of her no more,” was the deep answer.

"I have dismissed the subject," said he ; "but it is dull work here alone. Do you mind talking of the old times now, when you and I were boys, Hugh ?"

It was for Hugh's sake that he asked the question, but Hugh did not guess it at the time, and set aside his work for good that evening, and went back to his seat near the couch, on which Stephen lay so often now. And Lucy, coming downstairs a short time afterwards, found the brothers talking of the old times with a fervour and interest that were new to them.

The days seemed to flow speedily towards the end after that confidence between the brothers, and every day left less time for Hugh to wander on his own road, from which, the greater light excluded, the more morbid satisfaction it appeared to afford. The next week there arrived the old couple from the country ; and later in that week Stephen called Hugh to his side, and said :—



“I should like to see her now !”

“Is it intended to be a long interview ?”

“No.”

“To-morrow she shall be written to, and to-morrow—I shall be absent from home.”

Hugh kept his word ; and when the morrow came, and Bessy—touched by the few words written to Stephen’s dictation, which told his condition, and begged to see her once more—was again in the old home in Seymour Street, the owner of that home was wandering about the London streets.

It was not a long interview between those who might have been lovers once, but it compressed within its narrow limits much of pain ; for there were many associations connected with their meeting, and it was their last interview this side of the grave.

Both were embarrassed, for both had much to keep back, and the name of Hugh was a forbidden one. Stephen was pained to see the pale face and the sad expression thereon ;

he felt that it was his work, and that his unruly tongue had set her and Hugh apart. If he could but live again from that day, what a different life for his brother and that girl !

“ There is nothing in the past which you have not forgiven, I hope, Bessy,” he said, when their interview was drawing to a close.

“ There is nothing which I have ever had to forgive, Stephen,” she replied ; “ you have been a dear and valued friend of mine all my life, and helped much to gladden it in its saddest times.”

“ You are very kind to say so.”

“ I say it with all my heart—do you doubt it ? ”

“ No—not now.” Then he added, after a pause, “ are you happy with Miss Davis ? ”

“ She does all in her power to make me happy ; she is a good woman—a good Christian.”

“ What a while ago it seems now since the



mountain days," said Stephen—"since I thought what an useful wife she would make a runaway carpenter."

It was his old light tone, but it was a poor effort, although Bessy smiled sadly at it. He was anxious to see her leave him with a smile, however—as if that were probable in such a parting! But he had ever been a visionary, and indulged strange fancies.

"May I read to you before I go?" she asked, in a low tone. "You will pardon me, but you do not seem to think much of your bible at this time."

"The good genius has deserted us," he said, meaningly.

"May I read?"

"Yes—it is kind of you."

Bessy sat down, and read a chapter of the New Testament to him; and he listened attentively, and gave a little sigh as she concluded.

"They are good words, and tell me what

I have neglected—but they do not appeal to me, or rouse me very much. Whatever the fate before me, I can meet it."

"That is recklessness, Stephen."

"No—I think not."

"Will you let me send Mr. Parslow here to see you?"

"I cannot expect that he will take the trouble."

"I am sure that he will be very glad to come."

"Well then—I will be glad to see him!"

Bessy reached out her hand and said,

"Shall I bid you good-bye now?"

"Ah! it must be that sooner or later—I have been selfish, and kept you at my side too long. Good-bye."

When her hand lay in his, and he was looking at her swimming eyes, he said,

"I am a weak fellow—I have been weak and erring all my days, and the ruling passion lasts with me to the end. Bessy, I am going

to break a promise I made my brother Hugh, yesterday."

"Oh! no, no—don't do that!" she cried.

"It was a rash promise, and it is merciful to break it. Bessy, you will not remember him with anger?"

"No—why should I?"

"In the far off days will you think of Hugh a little?—for in the far off days I have a dreamy hope still. Should you and he meet in that distant time of which I speak, will you revive my name, and let it be perhaps—ah, perhaps!—a peacemaker between you. There is only one I have ever loved more than him in all my mis-spent life—and Hugh's future is a dark and lonely one, and full of bitter memories."

"Stephen—is not all this futile? Is it possible that my life can ever cross that of your brother's again—both our paths lying so wide apart, and not likely to intersect each other's. Say that they ever cross, dear friend—what then?"



“ Ah ! what then ? ” murmured Stephen—“ we will not talk of it any more. Only think of it occasionally, Bessy, for in the future what may not happen in a world as strange as this ? Say good-bye now—God make your life a happy one, dear Bessy ! ”

She stooped and kissed him lightly on the forehead, and then went from the room, he following her with his anxious eyes. The door closed between them, and the last meeting on earth between Bessy Calverton and Stephen Speckland was over.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FIRM TO THE LAST.

The Reverend Jacob Parslow did not require twice telling that there was one ill and sorrowing in Seymour Street, and that his counsel might be of service there. His religion was not confined within the bounds of his own parish —it was the creed of a good Christian, and had no limits.

He was at Seymour Street next day, and the next; he devoted the time he had to spare to bringing Stephen Speckland to that knowledge of the truth to which more than once he had approached. And Stephen, of a

nature naturally docile, was not a stubborn subject under his hand ; his fear had been that his new life had begun too late, and it only required the kind supporting words of the good man at his side to re-assure him. He was grateful for Mr. Parslow's visits, to which he speedily began to attach an interest, and anxiously wait for.

“Yours should be a happy life, Mr. Parslow,” he said on the third morning, “enjoying the respect and love of so many.”

“I am as happy as the rest of the world I believe,” he said ; “I have my little crosses and vexations ; I see some of my best friends thinking too much of the world and living for it, but I am happy. I build my faith on things imperishable.”

“It must be a hard task for one in health and strength, with all the world's temptations to battle against,” mused Stephen ; “for it is hard for me, lying here apart from action, to detach myself from worldly thoughts.”

“Why hard?” asked the minister.

“I shall leave so many unhappy—so many in the thickest of the fight, on the wrong side, upholding the wrong cause.”

“It is human life.”

“But those I leave are my best friends, and things might have been so different had not the trials come!”

“Trials were to teach us endurance.”

“And endurance has its limits when the trials are unceasing. Do you know of whom I am thinking?”

“Your brother?”

“Yes—and Bessy Calverton. She had gladdened his heart, and he was turning away from the darkness, when the blow fell. If I had only died six months ago, and not have marred all by my rashness! Mr. Parslow, is Bessy Calverton happy?”

“I think she will be. She has met her disappointment early in life, and there may lie before her much to brighten the future.

She is more grave and thoughtful than her years warrant, perhaps ; but that is natural."

" Yes."

" Do you think your brother ever loved her ? "

" More than himself, sir."

" I cannot understand it. Will you tell me the story, if it will not pain you too much ? "

Stephen very briefly related the particulars of the breaking of the engagement, pausing now and then to take breath, and struggle with his racking cough—for he had grown very weak during the last two days. He was no longer one of the family in that back parlour which he had brightened for so many years by his presence, but shut in his own room, where sad figures came softly stealing to his bedside, to ask if he wanted anything—if he felt a little better, or more weak.

Mr. Parslow shook his head at the conclusion ; he could not tell all that was hidden in

Bessy Calverton's heart from the simple relation of the story—he saw only the disruption of an engagement hastily begun.

“Surely, it is best that such an engagement is ended.”

But Stephen held firmly to his opinion.

“They were both happy; he loved her with his whole soul, and she was learning to love him—did love him, perhaps: who can tell? Mr. Parslow, you will do your best for Hugh when I am gone? You are the friend who will come in his solitude and seek to turn him from the darkness in which he would enwrap himself?”

“I will try.”

“Now and then—not too often,” said Stephen, ever considerate. “You know his nature, and how hard and exacting it is, and how, with an undue pressure, it will take the contrary way, and defy all effort. But now and then,” he repeated, anxiously, “call to see him here; speak to him of me, and he

will listen, I think. Tell him of all my last wishes—not to shut the door against his chances of a better life."

Mr. Parslow promised.

"I do not say he will ever be a happy man; he has been a man all his life to cling to one thought, and follow it for evil or good. There is only one can ever make him happy even now—you will remember that?"

"Can it ever be—is it possible?"

"I don't know. I have spoken of this to Bessy, and she has answered like yourself; and still the dreamy hope I mentioned to her flashes before me. But then," with a faint smile, "I have spent my life in castle-building. We are all castle-builders, good Mrs. Wessinger has declared."

"So is half the human race," observed Mr. Parslow; "we must look forward, and count the prizes that never fall to our share."

The conversation passed to a topic more serious, which it is not our place to intrude

upon our readers, and the day passed away, and then the next; and doctors and physicians appeared again, and shook their heads more gravely than ever as they came downstairs, where Hugh was anxiously awaiting them. Stephen required now a constant watcher by his bedside, and Hugh would let no one take the place but himself, but sat up night after night, and was as gentle and considerate with him as a woman. To have seen Hugh Speckland then, was to disbelieve in the hard nature that resisted every effort to soften it, and to find it difficult to believe that, the last task over, the last duty accomplished, he would return to his labours the same callous being, to whom no lesson had been taught by a dying brother's gentleness and love.

No lesson even at the last—on that still summer night, when the moon was peering over the black railway arch into the sick chamber. No lesson ever to be learned by

that man who would hew for himself his own fate.

Hugh had been sitting by the bedside with his arms folded on his chest, staring down at the carpet, and absorbed in his reverie. He had fancied Stephen was sleeping, until the brother's thin hand touched his own.

“What are you thinking of, Hugh?”

“Nothing,” answered Hugh.

“What is the hour?”

Hugh looked at his watch, and answered—  
“Twelve.”

“Feel my pulse, Hugh—is it weaker?”

Hugh placed his fingers on the pulse of his brother, and then turned deathly pale, and looked anxiously at that wan face beside him.

“Shall I—shall I call them, Stevie?”

“Yes—I think I should like to see them all—again!”

Hugh left the room, and went from door to door, knocking softly, and whispering the

fatal news for which they had waited, and slept lightly many nights—for which we all have waited and prayed against in our turn, and hoped against hope, till the tapping at the door has sounded like the hand of fate on our hearts.

Hugh re-entered the room, and Stephen, with a feverish impatience that was new to him, beckoned him to the bed-side.

“ You will not like me to speak of the one old subject before them—but Hugh, Hugh, *do* think a little of what a life you are making for yourself ! ”

“ I have thought.”

“ Do promise me to see Bessy Calverton again ? My last wish, Hugh—remember ! ”

Hugh’s face betrayed a strange agitation, but he compressed his lips, and turned away his head.

“ Will you not ask her to be your wife again, Hugh ? ”

“ Never.”



“ She will make you happy.”

“ Impossible.”

“ Will you not seek her once again—just once ? ”

“ No ! ”

“ Firm to the last, Hugh ! ” murmured Stephen.

“ For her sake as well as my own—for all our sakes,” said Hugh, in the same low tones ; “ she should have been my brother’s wife, not mine. I stood in the way, and marred her life and yours. Better apart.”

“ You will be ever alone, my dear Hugh,” said Stephen ; “ there will never come a fair hour, a cheerful thought, to make your work light, or your home worthy of the name. And I had pictured such a home for you once ! ”

“ Ah ! don’t speak of it,” and Hugh’s lip quivered.

“ You will be——”

“ Stephen,” said Hugh, “ you are distress-



ing yourself unnecessarily—you are regarding a future that must be a mystery. Will you believe that I shall be happy in my way—neither grieving, desponding, nor misanthropical, but quietly happy, with a trust in myself that cannot deceive me? Will it be a consolation to know that the first shock is over, and day by day I am nearing recovery—that the world is even treating me with respect, and talking of me and my works, and that, in seeking a name, I shall forget her."

"She is unhappy too—you will think only of yourself!" replied his brother.

"She will be happy in good time—it is woman's nature to shake off a sorrow—if sorrow it could have been, that released her from me. My dear brother, is this a time to talk of her?"

The door opened as he spoke, and Lucy, white and trembling, found her way to the bed-side, and fell sobbing there, with Stephen's arm resting lightly round her neck.

“ You will live for our blind sister, Hugh, and take my place, and let her not miss me too much.”

“ I will do my best.”

“ I have nothing to bequeath you, Hugh, but my old cheerfulness of heart. If you would only but inherit it ! ”

“ I am not worthy of the blessing, Stephen.”

“ It is a gift that must die with me, then,” sighed he ; “ where is my mother and father ? —how long they are—in coming ! ”

The father and mother were by their dying son at last, and he stretched both his hands towards them, saying—

“ Good-bye. For all the past care and love, your child’s best thanks ! ”

“ Oh ! my poor dear boy—the best of all of them ! ” sobbed Mrs. Speckland.

“ No, no—you are unjust—the best son is there, to remain a blessing and a comfort to

you after I am gone. Shall it not be so—brother—Hugh?"

"Yes."

"That is a hearty promise—you will keep it. Remembering them a little more, you will be a better man, old Hugh."

"With God's help."

"Now let me speak to Hugh again, Lucy. Now, good-bye, sister—a blessing on your future marriage—it will come, I feel it. Hugh," he called.

"I am here," said a hoarse voice by his side, and the stern brother took his hand and held it tightly within his own. Not stern, or hard, or cruel then, but a child in his weak efforts to conceal his grief.

"Oh! Stevie—Stevie—if *you* had only stayed with me! If God had only spared you, I could have suffered and been strong."

The old—old wish was still troubling the dying man. He could not shake it off even

in that hour, or forget the one chance left to make that brother happy.

“Hugh,” he said, “you love her still—I am not deceived. For the last time, I beg of you to seek her out—again: you will not say No—now.”

“I must.”

“It is my last wish.”

“*No!* For it is a wish to cast a blight upon my life,” Hugh added, after a painful silence—“to fill my own with suspicion and doubt—only think that, Stephen, and do not blame me. Ask me anything else—and I will fulfil it—God be my witness in this awful trial!”

“God be witness to a brighter day than this for you, old Hugh,” said Stephen, in a tone more faintly still—“it is my earnest prayer. Now say good-bye, and let me die —thus!”

Hugh whispered his good-bye, and held his brother by the hand, and stooped and kissed

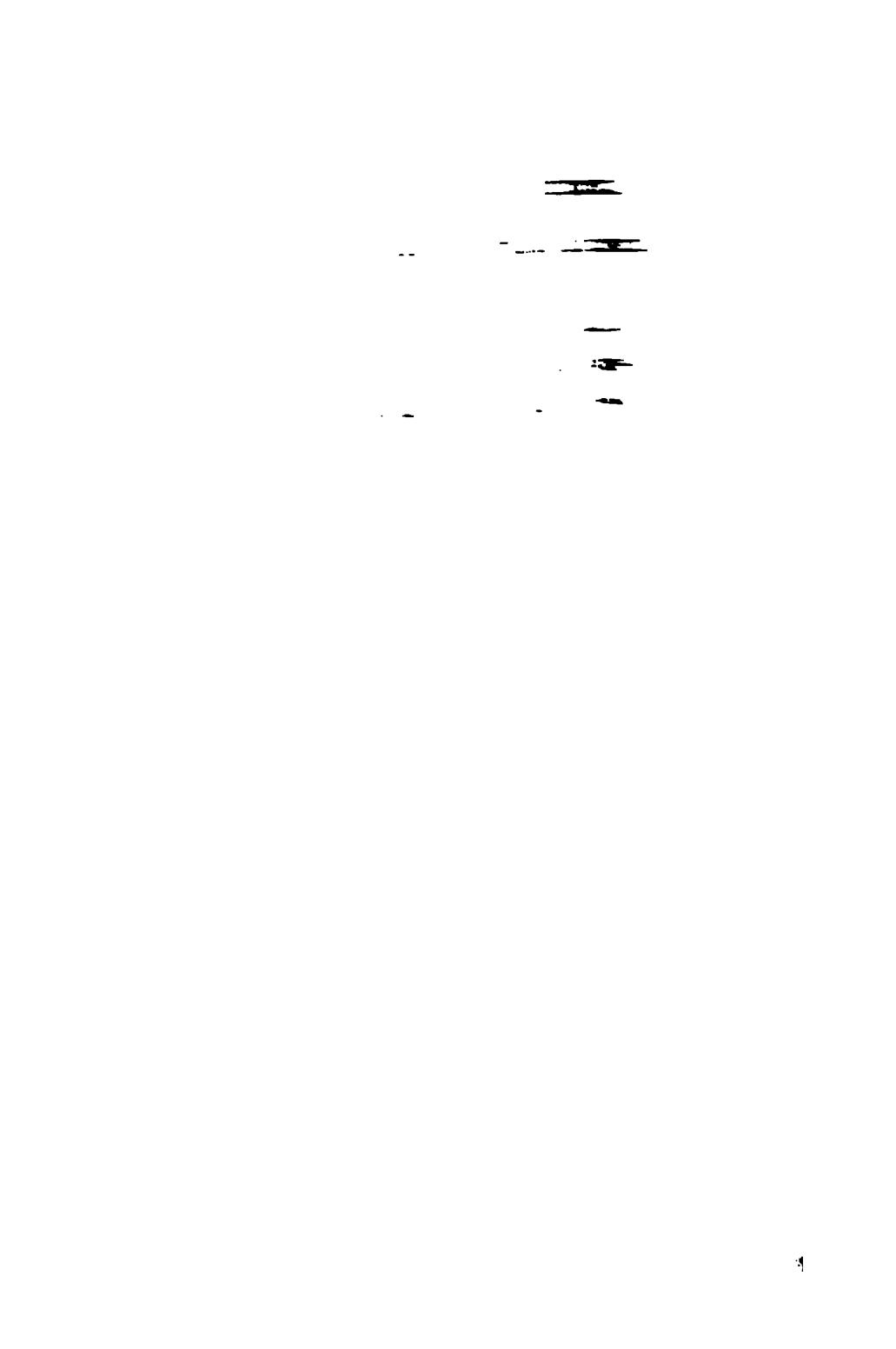
him as he lay there, as though he were a little child.

And like a little child he calmly died, with Hugh's hand in his own—and there was mourning in the house of Speckland.

END OF PART THE FOURTH.

PART THE LAST.

VAIN EFFORTS.





# I.

## MANŒUVRES.

in, and for no man's  
brother, hope, dies  
world takes no heed of  
off with each of its  
the sun. There must be  
joy in that world too, to  
other, purer one, where all  
is the lot of man to suffer,  
grow strong.

Malverton, encouraged by the  
ever before her, had grown  
since the day she bade Stephen





ed her  
m the  
r. Par-  
hange ;  
nd yet  
nd help  
readily  
ad tested  
last two  
union with  
pure, had  
nnobled it.  
mind, and  
She had  
to the task  
enced ; she  
v her efforts,  
rsevere when  
ved vain, and  
ere returned  
ratitude. She  
slow and Mary

Davis—she had youth and energy on her side, and the only fear of her friends, as she grew paler every day, was, that she would overtask her strength and give way. But Bessy Calverton persevered, and in the sick room, in the homes where “poverty, hunger, and dirt” held sway, in the schoolroom as Sunday teacher, poor men, women and children learned to love her.

The Reverend Jacob Parslow regarded his *protégée* with a full heart—from the one step in the right direction which he had indicated, it was pleasant to trace the result, to see the manifold good which had succeeded it. If one false step—alas, too often!—carry the weak and erring to the verge of the precipice, it is worth remembering that one step away from wrong may set the wanderer on the deserted path, which, following earnestly, may lead to heaven! There is no telling what an evil word, falling on soil that nourishes things evil, may result in; but God be



thanked, there is no guessing either the il-limitable good which the one right word may work in that strange mystery, the human heart. It is well and encouraging to know that midst the throng of wilful mortals seeking their own doom blindly, there pass them working upwards to the light some hopeful, trusting pilgrims, with confidence in the glorious Hand that guides them on their way.

During two long years Bessy had seen nothing of her sister Lotty. Since the break-up of the "El-Dorado" she had vanished in the crowd, might have even died, Bessy thought sometimes, with never a friend at her side, to give her comfort in her last hour, or whisper hope to her. And thoughts of Lotty troubled Bessy Calverton in times that were not unfrequent; the uncertainty of what had followed their last meeting would often add to her depression. Were they ever to meet again, now there was no danger

to be warned of? Was Lotty still reading Mary Davis's bible, and striving against the hard fate that kept her down—or had she given up, and fallen to a lower depth. She prayed not every night; but Lotty, as an answer to her prayers, appeared not before her.

From the Reverend Jacob Parslow she heard now and then of the old love; he who might have been married to her now, had the adverse current not borne her away from him! Mr. Parslow had not forgotten his promise to Hugh's brother, and made a point of calling now and then, in conformity with it. Hugh received him with some degree of courtesy, but the incumbent of St. Owen's was never satisfied with the result of his visit. There were times when he fancied his earnest words, his urgent appeals, touched the man who silently worked and listened to him, and said nothing; but there were times also when the nether millstone

might have been a fitting representative of the state of that man's heart. Hugh would talk of Stephen, of himself, of his father and mother in the country, of the blind sister—to whom, as Stephen's charge to him, he was strangely kind and gentle—on only one subject would he decline discussion; and Mr. Parslow, knowing the pain to ensue therefrom, seldom intruded, it before him. Hugh, Bessy learned, was no longer living in Seymour Street, but rented furnished apartments further west, where he was nearer to the great publishing houses that required his services. Bessy read of his name occasionally; and in books and papers that by chance came to her hand the name of Hugh Speckland beneath an engraving or an etching set her heart beating once or twice. But she was glad he was well known and gathering fame; he had been, to a certain extent, an ambitious man, and perhaps the name he was making for himself had long rendered

him happy, and forgetful of her. She missed Lucy Speckland more than she owned to the kind friends with whom she lived, although she knew that only pain could follow their meeting. She could believe that Lucy had not forgotten her, although they were divided from each other, and never a word passed between them. She thought often of Lucy's long engagement, and whether it would end like hers in some distant day, despite the faith that still existed in that Harry, who was so long in coming for his blind betrothed ; knowing human weakness better now, and having less belief in heroism, she feared the end of Lucy Speckland's one romance was fast approaching. But there are exceptions to every rule in life ; and though heroes are scarce amongst the ranks of men, there are still one or two to keep our trust alive. Bessy Calverton, whose hero proved but of common stuff after all, may be not a fair judge in this matter.



And, perhaps, we all have our heroes to set on our pedestals, and make much of, till they are tried in the furnace, or the pedestal shivers, and the idol we have worshipped topples down in the dust. Even Mrs. Wessinger had her hero ; and though a gentleman of forty-two, with ill fitting habiliments, and a wrinkled countenance, may be but a sorry specimen, still there was something of the self-denying hero in him, and there were many worse judges of human excellence than Mrs. Wessinger.

Good Mrs. Wessinger was still prosecuting her one mysterious idea, although rather perplexed that it made but little progress. She was only living to see that idea brought to perfection, she said, to die happy and comfortable.

And the opportunity to still further develop it came one day suddenly and unexpectedly.

Mary Davis, Mrs. Wessinger and our

heroine, were together in the little drawing-room of St. Owen's Terrace one evening, and Bessy had just finished her usual custom of reading a chapter of the bible aloud after supper, when Mr. Parslow made his appearance.

“ You'll excuse me intruding upon you at so late an hour, ladies,” he said, “ but I am the bearer of good news.”

“ And good news is always welcome,” said Mrs. Wessinger; “ sit down, my dear master, and let us be the first to hear it.”

“ To a certain extent it is good news,” remarked Mr. Parslow when he was seated, and engaged in nervously buttoning and unbuttoning his shabby kid gloves, “ although at present I am not so exhilarated or thoughtful as I might be. Dear me, what a great deal it requires to satisfy us. Here is a rise in life for Jacob Parslow, and Jacob ungrateful and inclined to feel morbid. Here is a snug living in a country town offered me by an old

college friend, who has turned up in the most romantic manner—a nice little income of four hundred pounds a year waiting for me."

His auditors hastened to offer their congratulations, although more than one face was shadowed at the news.

"I don't know what makes me feel so dull about it," said he; "perhaps our council of four, that has lasted now these two years and a half, had its attractions, and to break it up suddenly gives me a little pain. And then all my old parishioners, whose ways I have grown accustomed to, and who are now accustomed to mine—it will be a struggle to part with them, notwithstanding my successor, whoever he may be, will do his duty by them as well as myself. But it does seem strange to give up St. Owen's."

"Ah! and all the old faces," remarked Mrs. Wessinger.

Mary Davis, who had been listening gravely to the news, looked up and said—

“Will it be long before you enter upon your new duties, Mr. Parslow?”

“I am expected almost immediately—the rectorship is now vacant, and the curate is doing all the duty. Poor young man, I hear he complains a great deal, as if two services a day were enough to ruin any constitution ; he should be incumbent of St. Owen’s for a little while. And,” turning to Mrs. Wessinger, “what was that which you said about all the old faces, my dear lady?”

“I said it seemed strange to give them all up.”

“Yes—but, but—bless my soul, I must not be left entirely alone. I have been so used to seeing you all, that I cannot part with every face for the sake of four hundred a year and a home in the country. You at least, Mrs. Wessinger, I have set my heart upon having for a housekeeper again.”

“My dear master !” cried she, leaping in her chair, and then sinking back again, and

extinguishing suddenly the radiant expression of her countenance—"it is very kind of you, but—but I cannot leave Miss Davis. I am engaged till Christmas-twelvemonth as her companion, Mr. Parslow."

"Bless my soul," again repeated Mr. Parslow, in dismay.

"Mrs. Wessinger need not fear my——," began Mary ; and then she stopped, bewildered by an extraordinary pantomimic action on the part of Mrs. Wessinger, which being perfectly extempore, and the performer thereof out of practice, merely suggested the idea that Mrs. Wessinger had gone out of her mind.

"I am quite determined to stay in London," said Mrs. Wessinger, at last, "and I won't have any agreements cancelled, or anything: Don't say any more, Miss Davis, but leave me to explain to Mr. Parslow at another opportunity. Until Miss Davis is married, I shall not leave her—a poor little Welsh girl, as she is—to the mercies of the London ragamuffins."

“Married!” exclaimed Miss Davis, blushing and bewildered at this assertion; “how very foolish you are to be sure, this evening, Mrs. W.!”

Miss Davis had not expressed herself so petulently, or felt so much annoyed, since her peevish days at Aberogwin. As for the incumbent, what with the flat refusal of his old and faithful servant, and the after-comments with which she had accompanied it, the Reverend Jacob Parslow was too confused to give utterance to anything save the usual benediction on his soul and body.

“Many funny things happen there are no guessing at,” she said; “I shouldn’t be surprised so very much myself. Why, you are not more than thirty I suppose—a sensible, marriageable age, when all the girl’s nonsense is over, and one can judge wisely and well. Of course, I don’t suppose you are going to be married to-morrow, Miss Davis.”

Mr. Parslow here came to the rescue, and

contrived to turn the conversation into another channel, with something like effect. But it was a dull hour during which he stayed there and talked of his new living, and it was with a sense of relief that he rose to bid them adieu till the morning.

“I shall call to-morrow, Miss Davis,” said he, “and talk a little more of the old pensioners I am about to commit to your charge. It is a subject that cannot be dismissed in a moment.”

Leaving Mary Davis still somewhat confused, he went slowly along the narrow hall, preceded by Mrs. Wessinger. At the door he looked very gravely at his ancient housekeeper.

“Mrs. Wessinger, Mrs. Wessinger,” he said, shaking his head at her reproachfully, “I can’t make you out.”

“Why not, sir?”

“I thought you would have been glad to be my housekeeper again—you are used to

"Married!" exclaimed Miss Davis and bewildered at this assertion; ' foolish you are to be sure, this ev W.!"

Miss Davis had not expressed petulently, or felt so much annoy peevish days at Aberogwin. cumbent, what with the flat and faithful servant, and the with which she had accompanied Jacob Parslow was to utterance to anything : it isn't diction on his soul and ' al has no

"Many funny things , as if it were guessing at," she said prised so very much .. to try and persuade not more than thirty, Davis is likely to miss marriageable age, w is over, and one day" said Mrs. Wessinger, Of course, I don't be married to-mor' and body, if you weren't a Mr. Parslow like I should think you were

id he ; "I—I—good

a poor old  
per, Master

amongst other things  
e disturbed me this  
said he.

think of being happy, sir, in  
me—of taking a wife for a com-  
—I'm sure you're not a bit too

I'll wish you a good evening, Mrs.  
Wessinger," cried the scared incumbent.  
"A good evening to you ! "

And the Reverend Jacob Parslow, after  
being shut out in the street, went slowly  
down the steps, and paused at the bottom  
one, and nibbled at the finger ends of one of  
his gloves as usual.

"A most remarkable woman," mused he,  
half aloud ; "if I had not known her so well

and so long, I should have certainly fancied she had been drinking this evening."

He moved on at a slow rate of progression, and turned up his own steps at a few paces distant, and halted on the top one, and thought of Mrs. Wessinger's eccentric behaviour again.

"She's generally a sensible woman," thought he; "she must mean something. She always means something."

He opened the door with his latch-key after this second soliloquy, and repaired to his room, lighted his table lamp, adjusted the reflector, and sat himself down to compose one of his sermons for next Sunday, now a leisure hour presented itself. A nice night for composition, with St. Owen's more quiet than usual, and a less number of carts rumbling about the streets, and no boys whooping to and fro, and clattering up and down the steps, and giving runaway knocks. His MS. paper was beneath his hand, the pen

his fingers, his little reference  
for a text, the light shone on  
the amiable face as he stooped over  
his used work; a scratch or two with his  
nails, then he set it aside, and looked round  
his lonely room, and thought of "that re-  
markable woman's" eccentric behaviour. "It  
is not everybody that can go away for ever,  
as if it were for only next week." A strange  
remark, that indirectly accused him of a want  
of feeling, as if *he* could leave them all,  
and not be affected by the separation!  
"Think of taking a wife for a companion  
now, sir." A wife! He who was going on  
for forty-three, and growing older every day  
—why, whom could he take for a wife?—  
who would care for him or understand his  
old-fashioned ways? Years ago it might  
have been different; when he was a very  
young man he fell in love and was jilted.  
That was his time to think of a wife, and he  
had let it escape him. And yet, now he

came to consider it, that was *not* the time ; for his father was ruined after that, and he had become the incumbent of a poor parish, with an income of a hundred and forty or fifty pounds per annum—what an income for a wife, and what a home for her ! She would have never been happy, unless she had been a quiet, religious woman, with strength to bear adversity bravely—just such a woman as Mary Davis, in fact.

Ah ! she was a good little woman that Mary Davis ; the only one he had known in his life-time who united to much sound common sense, an abnegation of self that was out of the common. A good woman, who gave nearly all she had to the poor, and lived for them and their sorrows—what a wife for a clergyman !—what a helpmate and a companion in his labours ! And that remarkable woman who had come out so that particular evening—he could think of no words more expressive than “ come out ” just at that

moment—had talked in the most natural manner of Miss Davis marrying some day in the future, quite as a matter of course !

The Reverend Jacob Parslow did not succeed very well with his theological studies that night ; he bundled his manuscript and pens out of the way, and left his seat at the table, and took to pacing up and down the room, with a slow regular tramp, that worried his landlady almost to death in the room underneath.

He arrived at the determination that it was all very foolish speculation, however, and went to bed confirmed in that opinion, and woke up and seasoned his breakfast with it, and went early next day to Miss Davis's to sketch that little plan concerning his parishioners which he had spoken of last night.

He did not know how it was, but Mrs. Wessinger required Bessy's company very particularly in the upstairs room that morning, and he was left to discuss his plans, and

talk of going away with Mary Davis all alone ! And then Mary Davis, it struck him, looked paler and more sad than usual, a fact which necessarily led to inquiries about her health, and then—and then—the Reverend Jacob Parslow, in a moment of excitement, in a formal, but in a tender gentlemanly way for all that, offered his hand and heart to the little Methodist, and was accepted, after much blushing and a great deal of emotion.

“And we four shall not be separated, after all,” said Mr. Parslow at a later hour, when Mrs. Wessinger and Bessy were in the room, and he had, to the surprise of one, at least, stated the overtures he had made to Mary Davis; “for we shall require a house-keeper in the country, and Bessy Calverton will not be too proud to live with her cousin Mary till we can find a good husband for her ? ”

Bessy murmured that he was very kind, and the tears swam in her eyes to think of

the good friends she had gathered round her, and of all their kind offers. She did not know then how near she was to another change from all this—she whose life had been made up of changes.

## CHAPTER II.

“SHOULD AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?”

“It was all my own idea, Bessy, my child,” said Mrs. Wessinger, confidentially, the evening of the same day. “I can say now, ‘it’s my doing,’ as I prophesied when I first saw them together.”

“Did you think of such a marriage all that while ago, Mrs. Wessinger?” asked Bessy.

“Ay, my child, I did,” was the reply; “when I saw Mary Davis for the first time, heard her talk, saw her anxiety to do good, I said, ‘That’s my dear master’s wife some day.’ She talks and thinks like him, and he’s

about the only man that's fit for her. It's all come true ; and what a happy couple they'll make, Bessy—the happiest under the sun, I'm sure of that ! To think I should live to find a wife for that dear young master of mine, after these many years !”

Mrs. Wessinger took all the credit to herself, and perhaps Mrs. Wessinger was right. Since she had been in Mary Davis's service she had spent her leisure time in eulogizing her “young master ;” talking of his many virtues, relating all those anecdotes in his life that had ennobled it, and which he had had too much modesty to allude to himself ; and Miss Davis had listened, till Mr. Parslow had become her hero as well as Mrs. Wessinger's.

And now it was all settled, and they were to be married in a fortnight ; two who understood each other so well, and had been friends so long, did not require a formal engagement after having once made up their minds.

It was a busy fortnight, and Bessy and Mrs. Wessinger found their own labours almost doubled, now Mr. Parslow and Mary were thinking a little of themselves for a change, and speculating in furniture, to be sent down in advance to the rectory. So love, with even the best and most disinterested, will interfere with "good works."

The engagement was a week old, when Bessy was returning late at night from a long round of visits to the sick and infirm of St. Owen's, Whitechapel. She was returning home somewhat dull, for she had had the painful task of breaking the news of Mr. Parslow's departure; and not all the assurance of the virtues of his successor seemed to comfort those who had known and looked up to Mr. Parslow for the last four years. They had grown used to his ways, been sustained by his ministry, and it would be hard to part with him.

Bessy was thinking of the ill news she had

diffused that day; and there was mingling with her thoughts the new country life before her, which she fancied she should not like so much as life in St. Owen's, Whitechapel. Add to this, that she was reflecting also on the nature of her position in the future, and thinking if it were not possible to be her own mistress, and less dependent on Mr. Parslow's kindness—and it may be imagined that her mind was fully occupied. Therefore, it was not until she was within a dozen yards of her home that she became aware of some one crouched upon the door-steps—some one whose sex it was difficult to distinguish, so dark was the night, and so huddled was the figure against the area railings.

Bessy was somewhat surprised at the appearance of a beggar or a wanderer at so late an hour, till the idea that it might be Lotty returned to see her after so long an absence, dismissed all the old thoughts, and

brought a train of new ones in their stead. And yet Lotty in that place, at that hour, in that strange huddled position, betokened a fall lower still from all that was right, and honest and womanly. If it were not Lotty she would feel relieved, however much her heart might yearn to see her sister.

And she drew a long breath of relief when she stood before the figure, and saw it was that of a man who, with his hat battered, as it were, over his eyes, had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue on the doorstep. Bessy touched him lightly on the arm, and he sprang to his feet with an alacrity that was too much for his strength, for he clutched at the iron railings to keep himself from falling.

“Have you no home, my poor man, that you sit here at so late an hour?”

“No home—starving!”

“Starving!” exclaimed Bessy; “will you wait a moment, please?”

She had one little foot upon the steps, when he stretched forth a long claw-like hand, and caught her by the mantle.

“ You live here, then ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ You are Bessy Calverton ? ”

“ I am. Why do you ask ? ”

Bessy felt her blood icing in her veins. The voice was not new to her ; the figure seemed to develop itself in the darkness to that of one from whom she had fled years ago, and from whom she had believed herself for ever free.

“ Because you may help me ; are the only one that can help me, and without you I must die here in the streets. Don’t scream —you know me now ! ”

He pushed back his disreputable hat, and disclosed the face of Richard Calverton—a face that had altered so much, was so pinched and ghastly, that it might have been his ghost’s, and looked no more unnatural.



“ You are Richard Calverton—my father ? ”

“ Ay, your father—don’t say the name, for God’s sake, or I shall be carried back to gaol, and killed by extra work and chains to my leg. I’m not here to harm you now—all that’s gone and past ; and I *am* your father, girl, and starving in the streets.”

“ Oh, this is awful ! ” cried poor Bessy.

“ Walk with me a little way up and down here. I have been waiting for you the last two hours.”

Bessy hesitated.

“ You needn’t be afraid of me now,” said he, with a harsh laugh, that Bessy well remembered. “ My life’s in your hands, and a word of yours can send me back to the Bermudas. See how a father trusts his child in such a moment as this.”

Bessy trusted him, and he passed his arm through hers, to support himself as he walked. And, cruel as had been his conduct towards her, and close as she had been to the wreck

by his own guilty acts, she felt for the first time in her life that he was her father, when he needed the support of her arm along the streets that night.

“It is strange that you should come to me,” said Bessy, as they walked slowly on.

“Whom else could I come to, Bessy?” said he, in a half churlish manner, and a half whimper; “who else wouldn’t have fastened on me like a blood-hound, and sold me for the reward that’s on my head? I’ve been a long while making up my mind to come to you; I didn’t know if I could even trust you—I don’t know now.”

He was looking eagerly into her face, and Bessy answered—

“You may trust me.”

“That’s spoken like my own child,” said he; “it was a toss up whether you would help me, or turn against me, and pay me out for old scores—and I chanced it. Why, I had nothing else to chance,” he said, betray-

ing his hand more to Bessy, although she was too agitated to detect the utter selfishness that lurked in the remark; “it was a last hope to come to you, when I was dying of want, and next to death’s door. And that wife of mine has all my money, and I can’t go and ask for it, lest some devil or other should make a grab at me.”

“ Hush—hush ! ”

“ Bessy, you must help me in some way or other. You have got a little money—have you not ? ”

“ A little.”

“ You’re a good daughter—I’m sorry now I treated you so ill. Upon my soul, I am ! ” he answered.

“ How did you escape ? ” asked Bessy.

“ I was driven to it by hard usage—they treated me like a dog, Bessy. They worked me to death in those cursed Bermudas all day, and sent me on board ship all night to sleep, where I caught a fever—two fevers—

and was worked as hard as ever before I was well again, and brought to skin and bone. You should see the arm a Christian government has left me—it's a splinter, that a baby could snap in two," he added.

"But you are sorry—you *are* really sorry for all the guilty past, father?" asked Bessy, anxiously; "you have come back to tell me that, I hope?"

"Oh! yes—I'm sorry," he responded, with alacrity—"and so awfully hungry, too. What's to be done with me, Bessy?"

"I am thinking."

"That's a good girl," he said—"think away your hardest."

They had turned by this time, and were retracing their way down the street.

"Are you known to be in London?" Bessy asked.

"No—I think not. They're," with a childish laugh, "all in the fog about me. Three of us escaped one day—poor old Bob

Jones was shot at, and hit—clean through the head—such a mess ! Jack and I ran for it, different ways—Jack was caught, and I hung about the woods for a time, and found a friend, who put me on board a ship where they were not too particular ; and, after a hundred shifts and chances, here I am. What's to be done with me, now my life's in your hands."

"Here is money—all I have," said Bessy, thrusting it into his hands ; "that will at least save you from starving for a time, should we not meet again just yet."

"Where are you going ?"

"To ask of those who love me, and are, perhaps, becoming anxious about me, what is to be done."

"They'll transport me, sure as a gun. My dear daughter Bessy, you'll never tell them you have met me to-night ?"

"They will not harm you, father. For my sake, I am assured that they will keep your secret."

“ Parslow is one of them.”

“ Yes—how do you know that? How have you been able to discover me?”

“ It’s another long story,” grumbled the father. “ I went to that place in Seymour Street first, and then to the West End, and all to no purpose—for *he* was a single man, living with a blind sister, I heard. Then I thought of the parson, and came crawling back to Whitechapel, and heard that he was going to be married to a Miss Davis—all the parish knows that—and that Miss Davis had a Miss Calverton living with her. That’s all—I’m dead beat with so much talk on an empty stomach, girl. And now—are you going to trust Mary Davis and the parson with your father’s life? For mercy’s sake just think again, girl, before you do anything rash. They’ll be glad enough to get rid of me, at any cost, remember.”

“ Tell me that you honestly repent the past life?”

“On my honour,” affirmed the veracious Richard Calverton.

And Bessy, who was anxious to believe, felt her heart thrill at his assertion. To have honestly repented of all the past sins, and to be striving to amend in the future—what a hope for him even at the last!

“You may trust my friends,” said Bessy; “will you wait here till my return?”

“Ay—somewhere here.”

Bessy withdrew her hand from his arm, and ran back lightly towards St. Owen’s Terrace, whilst he remained at the corner of the street watching her. Were there any pangs of conscience, as he watched, for all that guilty past he feigned to deplore; any regrets concerning the evil into which he had thrust that daughter, now returning good for it, and striving for him, and interested in his safety? It is doubtful!—the nature of Richard Calverton was iron, and the true feelings—if he possessed any—difficult to

move ; and in his whole career he had thought of nothing, cared for nothing, but himself. Even then, with Bessy's money in his hand, with Bessy's words vibrating in his ears, he did not seem to be thinking of her much, for he muttered "I'll chance it," as if he had been calculating the pros and cons respecting his own safety after his daughter had communicated to those who could bear him no love, the startling fact that he was once more in England.

Yes, he would chance it. He removed himself from the lamp-post against which he had been leaning, crossed the road, and walked slowly up and down the street. At the corner of the opposite street there was a policeman standing, and his presence there gave him a turn and brought his heart to his throat, although his nerve carried him past that guardian of the peace in the Whitechapel district. The policeman did not regard him suspiciously, however—rags and feebleness

“On my honour,” affirmed the vera.  
Richard Calverton.

And Bessy, who was anxious to l  
felt her heart thrill at his assertion.  
honestly repented of all the past sin  
be striving to amend in the future.  
hope for him even at the last !

“ You may trust my friends,”  
“ will you wait here till my return ? ”

“ Ay—somewhere here.”

Bessy withdrew her hand  
and ran back lightly toward  
Terrace, whilst he remained  
the street watching her.

pangs of conscience, as I  
that guilty past he feig  
regrets concerning the e  
thrust that daughter, in  
it, and striving for hi  
safety ? It is dou  
Richard Calverton  
feelings—if he pe

at  
old  
apt his  
him.  
—he would  
right of it ! —

and Bessy and another female were descending the steps. That looked well; he would not have cared to see the parson just then—he had always hated parsons awfully! Bessy's companion was thin and gaunt, and a person whom he had never seen—well, he must trust in strangers, he supposed, especially when strangers carried a basket that might contain some cold meat and a bottle of beer perhaps—and a little brandy. He hoped to God—he suddenly thought of his devotions then—that there was some brandy in that basket!

They crossed the road towards him, and for security's sake he turned into a narrow street that led to a wilderness of streets, and courts, and alleys, where all classes lived and tried to live. Bessy and the woman followed him, came up to him, when he stopped and looked curiously at Bessy's companion, and flinched a little from the steady gaze directed towards him.

"You're Richard Calverton then?" asked Mrs. Wessinger, abruptly.

"Yes."

"You've broken the laws of your country and defied them, and come back here and expect friendship from us," said she; "well, are you a better man?"

"I hope so," muttered Calverton.

"Ah! it's as well to be doubtful," said Mrs. Wessinger. "Here, take this basket—you'll find some food and drink there."

"Where's the parson—he knows I am here?"

"Yes, and was at first anxious to see you. I stopped that."

"You?" said Calverton.

"Do you think I would let a good man risk his name, and get into disgrace for aiding and abetting a man to escape the punishment he deserves? Do you think my young master was to lose all chances in life—however much he might feel for Bessy's distress—by such an action?"

“Bessy,” said Calverton, regarding Mrs. Wessinger, with no small alarm, “who is this—good person?”

“I’m Mrs. Wessinger, once of Seymour Street, whose house you watched when you wanted Bessy back; I’ve been Bessy’s friend from that time—I mean to keep so.”

“You’re very good.”

“Ah! that’s more than you are,” returned the plain-spoken old lady; “although Bessy thinks you may be some day. If there’s a chance of that I shall not be sorry to have helped you, Richard Calverton, and have run the risk of being transported in my old age, perhaps, with this rash daughter of yours, who has been weak enough to be touched by your—repentance! She calls it repentance, mind.”

“It’s a kind of repentance,” explained Richard Calverton, who thought the old lady before him not to be easily impressed; “I can’t say that I feel much the better for it yet.”

“Well, that’s not a bad sign,” said Mrs. Wessinger; “and now, do you want me to find you a safe place to sleep, or will you trust to your own discretion?”

“I’m afraid of the lodging-houses—there are too many people that I know in London.”

“Come with me, then—Bessy, bid your father good-night.”

“What is she going away for?”

“Because she is better at home—and must not risk too much. Because she has promised to be guided by her friends, if we take this matter up. Because,” she touched Calverton’s arm, “we cannot trust you yet.”

“Well,” said Calverton, with a sigh, “why should I be trusted?”

“If you have any love for your daughter, any regret for the evil you have caused, and the further evil you might have caused, you may come and bid her good-bye to-morrow night at nine, before you go away for good.”

“Where am I to go?” asked Calverton.

“We may talk that over to-morrow—Bessy, I and you. Think of your plans, and we may try to aid them. You’ll see no one else, you understand.”

“The fewer the better.”

Bessy bade her father good-night, and held her hand towards him. Calverton did not perceive the movement till Mrs. Wessinger said—

“Your daughter wishes to shake hands with you—sign of a better trust in her, which you will not abuse.”

Calverton placed his attenuated hand in hers, and wrung it with some warmth.

“Good night, my girl. For all your kindness, many thanks. Good night.”

Bessy watched her father walk feebly along by the side of Mrs. Wessinger, and whispered a prayer after them, that the first sign of a great change in him whom she had feared throughout her life might not grow less with time.

“Whereabouts are you going to take me, Mrs. Wesleyan?” inquired Calverton.

“Only a few steps down the next street,” was the reply; “can’t you walk faster?”

“I’m eaten up with rheumatism.”

“Take hold of my arm, then,” said Mrs. Wessinger. “Good Lord!” she added, in a lower tone; “to be walking about Whitechapel arm in arm with a housebreaker.”

Dick Calverton’s quick ears caught the words, and resented them.

“I never broke into a house in my life; I never raised my hand against a fellow-creature; I was an honest man, except for one little mistake, in minding a parcel for a friend.”

“Ah! we all make our little mistakes,” said Mrs. Wessinger, drily; “will you take care and not make a mistake of the instructions I am going to give you?”

“Trust me.”

“The little house I am about to take you

---

to belongs to a poor workman at a factory, who leaves at five in the morning, and is seldom home before nine at night. His wife is busy all day at her own work of weaving, and attending to a bed-ridden father in the front room. The wife is from the country, and cannot recognize you—the workman and father you are not likely to see. They have a room to let, and I am going to hire it for one night."

"It seems all safe. Do they know Bessy?"

"She comes and reads the bible to the father sometimes."

"Ah! that's awkward."

"Why—she is not coming to see you?"

"No," said Calverton, after a pause; "but the name is strange, and there may be a likeness!"

"Not the slightest," cried Mrs. Wessinger, indignantly.

"If anything should happen, I am Mr. Richards, then."

“And a gentleman from foreign parts,” added Mrs. Wessinger.

Richard Calverton thought there was a great deal of humour in Mrs. Wessinger; even had an idea that that estimable lady was a trifle unfeeling, considering his position, his misfortunes, and the grinding pains that were driving him mad. And Mrs. Wessinger at that moment had not a great deal of sympathy for the *ci-devant* honest Dick; she was a woman of the world, and read human nature correctly. She had her own suspicions of the true state of mind of Mr. Calverton, and believed that had there been another friend in the world to aid him and give him money, no fatherly affection would have brought him to his daughter’s side. And she hinted that fact pretty plainly, after she had prepared the way for the reception of Richard Calverton as a lodger, and she and that gentleman were standing in the passage of the house of refuge.

“ With a wife, brother, and another daughter living, and with fifty old friends to lay your hand upon, you find only one poor girl to trust in at this time. Be thankful that she is left you, man—that she has been spared to return you good for evil—that in her dear young heart there is still some affection, of which you are not worthy yet. Try and think of that to-night—if you ever prayed, man, in your wasted life, try and pray to-night, and remember that one friend in your prayers as she will you.”

Mrs. Wessinger spoke warmly, and he cowered before her, as the shadow of things evil must cower before the light and force of truth. Mrs. Wessinger puzzled him, and set him thinking till his head ached. She might have even touched him for a moment, till astonishment got the better of his feelings, as he pondered it all over in the back bed-room which she had procured for him. It was not a very elegant remark which he gave utterance

to, over his cold meat, with the door locked against intruders, but it expressed his astonishment pretty clearly.

“She is a rum ‘un!”

## CHAPTER III.

“THE DEVIL A SAINT WOULD BE.”

THE following evening the inhabitants of the little house in St. Owen's Terrace, together with the incumbent of St. Owen's church, waited, with no little anxiety, for the hour of nine to strike. He who had suddenly intruded upon so much of quiet happiness, had been the subject of considerable discussion that day. What was to become of him?—when would he rid them of his presence, and relieve them from that sense of responsibility, even of danger, which his stay in that neighbourhood engendered? Bessy alone had not these

thoughts, for she was not fearful for her future ; she could only think of the sick father, who had suddenly emerged into the every-day world again—of the change that was in his appearance—of the greater change which she believed was working in his heart. Had he returned with the old brutal scowl, the harsh threat, the threatening gesture, she would have turned to her friends for shelter—or, strong in her innocence and maturer years, have resisted him, and bade him go his way ; but to come back weak and helpless, and to throw himself upon her love and charity, was to affect her sensibly. After all, he was her father ; and a child's duty was to befriend him when he needed help, and trusted in her to bestow it. In her belief of his repentance, she could look forward to the time when he would return again some day, a wiser, better man than last night ; or write to her from a foreign land, and ask her to join him in some little home he had created

for his latter days—a home where God's word should not be excluded, and the darkness of the "El-Dorado" never again existent. It was a strange scene to draw, a strange future to almost look forward to, as to the crowning happiness of her life.

The clock struck nine at last, and no Richard Calverton. The room in which the interview was to take place remained still empty, and Mr. Parslow, whom Mrs. Wessinger and Mary Davis would not have connected with the secret for an instant, had retired to his lodgings in vain. Half-past nine—the pendulum of the little time-piece on the mantelshelf slicing its inroads into another half-hour, and no sign of him they had met yesternight. Mr. Parslow had promised to return at ten, and hear those particulars concerning which he was extremely anxious, and in due course Mr. Parslow and a little boy with a note came up the steps of Mary Davis's house at the same time.

Mrs. Wessinger was putting her bonnet and shawl on to go round in search of Mr. Richards, when the note arrived. A consultation was held at once in the front parlour, and the note, which was addressed to Bessy, delivered to our heroine.

Bessy hastily opened it, and read the lines aloud :—

“ Dear Miss Calverton. Very ill.

“ RICHARDS.”

“ Humph! not too ill to have his wits about him,” remarked Mrs. Wessinger. But Bessy had sprung to her feet with pallid features. He was very ill—he was her father, and alone in the world—her duty was plain enough, and she did not flinch from it.

“ I will go to him at once!” she cried.

“ My dear Bessy, do let us consider a minute,” said her cousin Mary.

“ I must not forget whose child I am, at such a time,” said Bessy, with excitement; “ and

---

forget what power there may be to bring him to repentance."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Wessinger, "you have been always ready to act upon the instant. It is not wise—it is not proper. I appeal to Mr. Parslow."

Mr. Parslow was deep in thought, and attentively regarding Mary Davis's carpet.

"It confuses matters somewhat," he said, thus appealed to; "and Bessy is young and inexperienced—and he—well, well—he is ill now, and it is extremely hard to advise."

"I'll run round and see first if he is very ill," said Mrs. Wessinger. "Bessy, you'll excuse me, child, but I cannot trust your father yet."

Bessy sighed. Could she trust him herself?

Mary Davis and Mr. Parslow, approving of this suggestion, Bessy was forced to curb her impatience, and allow Mrs. Wessinger to depart on her mission. It seemed a long while before she returned, with so moody an

expression on her countenance, that the general idea that Richard Calverton had robbed the house and decamped immediately suggested itself.

“Is he not ill?” asked Bessy.

“He’s ill enough—yes, its truth. And he’s lying on his back there, groaning and calling for you and a doctor, and thinking he shall not live till the morning! Awfully bad sure enough he looks. I suppose you must go, Bessy.”

“Unless Bessy be afraid,” said Mary Davis; “she must not risk her health and strength for him who morally can have no claim upon her. If she have any fear—”

“I have only a fear that I may not be of use to him—of service to that God, who has perhaps brought him here to die.”

“Not to die—we won’t think so badly as that, Bessy,” said Mr. Parslow.

“Mayn’t it be the best thing that can happen?” whispered Mrs. Wessinger.

“Hush—it may be. God’s will be done, Mrs. Wessinger—we cannot oppose it.”

Bessy made a hurried inquiry concerning a doctor, which was responded to by Mrs. Wessinger, who had already sent for one; and then she was hurrying, a messenger of love and charity, to the house in which her father lay ill.

She found Richard Calverton tossing to and fro in his bed, and replying to the numerous questions of a tall slim gentleman in green spectacles.

“Ah! Miss Calverton,” said the father, his face lighting up at Bessy’s approach, “this is kind of you. You know Miss Calverton, doctor?”

“I have heard of her very frequently,” said the doctor with a bow; “her name is a household word in this parish, Mr. Richards.”

“Ah! she’s a good young woman, by all accounts. Always ready to help the sick and the unfortunate. Oh! Lord, doctor, will you

ever be able to get rid of this *screwing* pain?"

"I hope so."

"Make haste with the stuff, if it is to do me any good!" he groaned.

Bessy followed the doctor from the room, and asked if the sufferer were in any danger.

"I do not anticipate any danger," said the doctor; "he will require a patient and careful watcher, that is all. It is possible that he will be delirious to-night; give him the composing draught very regularly, Miss Calverton. Good morning."

When Bessy re-entered the room her father was sitting up in bed nursing his knees, and rocking himself to and fro.

"What does he say, Bessy?—wilful murder?" he asked, eagerly.

"He says there is no danger to be anticipated."

"What did he look so serious about, and frighten me out of my life for, then?" he said. "Does he think a man burning alive

and touched up with red-hot irons is strong enough to lie and bear it? Bessy, I'm going to die—I'm sure I am going to die, with all my sins thick upon my head, and all the imps of darkness sitting round my bed, waiting for a scramble after my soul. Don't leave me!"

"I will stay with you to-night."

"There's a good girl," he said, lying back in his bed, and beginning to toss to and fro once more; "you'll be a comfort to me yet, and be rewarded for it in another world—oh, this screwing! It's like that damned complaint I caught in the mountains years ago, when I first met you, girl. And it's a judgment!—and—don't leave me!" he cried again, and it required a reiteration of Bessy's intention to remain that night to satisfy him.

Richard Calverton, really ill for the first time in his life, was a coward. He had boasted too much of his strength, and been

too much a bully, not to give up all at once when laid low and left helpless. He was not grievously ill, but his excited imagination saw the grim king of terrors at his bedside, and the sands in the hour-glass running low. Better to have stopped in the Bermudas and worked his time out, than have fought his way by sea and land to die like a dog down a back street in Whitechapel. It was his usual luck. He had thought once upon a time, when he did come to die, that he should die like a Swell in the state bedroom of his little shooting-box down in the country somewhere —and look at him now! Why, he might not even die peaceably, if his secret once escaped that stifling sick chamber.

When the night grew late he became delirious in his sleep, as the doctor had prophesied, and raved of old times at the “El-Dorado,” and counted his gains, and wrangled over his share of the spoil in that back parlour, wherein he and “his school” used to lock themselves.

When he broke from his troubled dreams, he gave the old cry of "Don't leave me, Bessy!" and required his daughter's assurance once more repeated before he closed his eyes and re-commenced raving.

Mrs. Wessinger called at a late hour to hear what arrangements had been decided upon, and found Bessy firm in her intention of nursing her father, and resolved to sit up all night with him, and have no one to share her watch.

"He is my father," was her reply; "he will learn to love me now. He will submit himself to my teaching, and let me read the bible to him, and learn a lesson therefrom. Can I have a task before me that can give me greater satisfaction, Mrs. Wessinger?"

"No," replied Mrs. Wessinger, gazing ruefully at the future penitent, who at that moment was swearing his hardest, and knocking an imaginary Charles Edwin Calverton—to

whom he was a little indebted—from one side of the “El-Dorado” to another.

So Bessy kept her place by her father’s side, and nursed him from day to day, till he was able to sit up, and be reasoned with and read to. And Richard Calverton took Bessy’s reasonings and readings in much the same manner as he took his medicine—with a wry face, and a distaste for that which he thought might be good for him. He had a vague dreamy idea that all this bible reading would work some miracle in his favour, and that Bessy would never leave him again so long as he said he was sorry for the past, and intended to live honestly and soberly if he were spared.

In his peculiar position he felt himself entirely dependent upon his daughter; she had friends who had money to give her, and he had altered sufficiently to find Bessy good company. Nay, when he began to think of Bessy’s sacrifices for him, of the willingness

and cheerfulness with which she had come to his side in her trouble, he was a little grateful. He felt it threw a new light on Bessy's character, but it did not teach him to be a better man. When he was stronger he did not say, "Go back to your friends, and leave me to fight my own battle; do not link your life with that which may mar it for ever;" he simply preyed on Bessy's feelings, and feigned to be rapidly improving in his morals; and, to interest her more in his unworthy self, he even made an effort once or twice to struggle through a chapter or two of that bible which Bessy was always putting in his way.

And Bessy's natural shrewdness of perception was deceived, inasmuch as she was anxious to deceive herself, and believe that her father was repenting of all his past sins. She had felt a void in her heart for a long, long while now—and her's was a loving nature, which required love in return. The affection

that her friends in St. Owen's Terrace bore her was not the affection that she craved—and here was a tie, that should have been naturally the strongest, forming for the first time between her father and her. Could she sever it of her own free will, when such a chance to do God's work was offered her?—was it natural or right? He was in trouble, poor, afflicted and disgraced—let her bear all with him, and be a comfort to him in his declining years.

Praiseworthy were these intentions, though misplaced on their object; who, however, did his best to encourage her in them, not by pressing her too much on the point, but by showing her how useful she was to him, and how he looked to her for everything. He was weak still; he did not believe he should ever regain his old strength—and who was to take care of him if Bessy forsook him? He could not even seek relief at the workhouse without owning his parish, and giving his real

name and address—and then, hey for the Bermudas and that accursed convict-ship, which had laid the groundwork of all his complaints !

Bessy resolved to live with him, and work for him. Well known in the parish now, and clever with her needle, she had little fear of not obtaining sufficient work, until such time as another plan could be resolved on. Her father had the idea of a little shop in a quiet neighbourhood, where Bessy could serve the customers, and he could lie snugly out of harm's way in the back parlour, and smoke his pipe, and read his paper, until the night came, when she and he could go for a little walk.

“ He should not trouble any one a great while longer,” he said, when delicately hinting his suggestions for the future; “ if his daughter, whom he loved, could only stay with him, keep him good, be at his side to close his eyes when it pleased the Lord to take him—that was all he wished ! ”

Bessy felt at times that all was not true in his speech, and that her father thought more of his own comfort than hers ; but they were early times yet, and she trusted to see with every day an improvement. She communicated her wishes, her intentions, to her old friends the night before the marriage of Mr. Parslow with her cousin ; and they listened sorrowfully, although they knew not what to suggest for a plan that was better. They had all great faith in Bessy Calverton, and were good Christians, whose hearts warmed at the thought of one sinner coming unto repentance. They might have their doubts of Richard Calverton's sincerity, but still there was a probability of Bessy's influence working the great change—for Bessy had energy and power, and her heart in the cause.

“ Well, Bessy,” said Mr. Parslow, “ I am sure you would like our consent to your plans, but there is one condition attached to it.”

“ And that ? ” inquired Bessy.

“ Is, that you take from me and my dear future partner in life, a loan of thirty pounds to begin with. We must not have you working yourself to death for him, and marring the good effort ; we must see you in some little business—in the country, if possible—that will bring in sufficient profit to keep you both. And pay back the loan too, of course,” added he, seeing that she hesitated.

“ You are very kind, sir. Oh ! my dear Mr. Parslow, shall I ever be able to repay you all your kindness and thoughtfulness ? I have been indebted to you all my life.”

“ My little kindness has been long repaid by your confidence in me—by a daughter’s, or a sister’s love. Which shall we say ? ”

“ A sister’s, to be sure,” added Mary Davis, who objected to her future lord and husband being made older than he really was.

“ So it is settled,” said Mr. Parslow, with a sigh that he could not repress “ I hope it

is for the best. I'll go round to your father to-day."

"No!" said Bessy, firmly; "the share of the danger in screening him from justice belongs to me now. Mrs. Wessinger has been right in keeping you from meeting him. Whatever happens, the minister of St. Owen's name must not be coupled with our illegal acts."

"But the minister of St. Owen's knows all about it, and is legally blamable for withholding his knowledge," said Mr. Parslow.

"But there is no one to blame you," said Mrs. Wessinger; "and there is some one to think of now, besides yourself, sir."

"To be sure," with his face brightening, as he turned to Mary Davis.

"And although that some one appreciates your good intention, she objects to your running into danger," added Mary.

"Thank you, Mary—thank you!" said the incumbent.

But though Mary Davis objected to the danger to which Mr. Parslow might expose himself, she took the trouble that evening to excuse her absence for a little while, and surprise Mr. Calverton and daughter—for Bessy was again at her father's side—by her appearance before them.

“I have come, Richard Calverton,” she said, “to make sure that you appreciate the trust we place in you, by leaving this innocent girl behind us.”

“Mary Davis may trust me,” he said, making a faint effort to rise, and sinking back in his chair again; “times have altered, and I have altered with them.”

“For the better?”

“Yes. I,” with a little snort that might have been intended for an appreciation of his own remark, “could not very well have altered for the worse!”

“You read your bible now,” with a glance at the book that lay on his lap.

“Yes—a little, Miss,” was the humble answer.

“The study of it will make you a good father and a faithful friend. Be that to my dear cousin Bessy, sir.”

“I will,” responded the father; and Mary left him with more confidence in Bessy Calverton’s future, despite the dark turn it might take at any instant.

“You will come to my quiet wedding to-morrow, Bessy?” said Mary Davis; “I must see my old friend, the little girl I loved at Aberogwin, at St. Owen’s.”

“Yes, I will be there to offer you my wishes for a long, long life of happiness with the worthy man you have chosen for a husband.”

“Ah!” sighed Mary, “he is too good for me. If my poor father were only living now!”

“He would be a little surprised at your change of religious opinion,” said Bessy, with an arch look at Mary.

“ Religious opinion is one thing and true religion another,” said Mary, sententiously; “ does it matter of what sect we are, if we love God and keep his commandments ?”

“ Ah ! you belong to Broad-Church now !” said Bessy.

“ Yes—I hope so !” and Mary Davis went home thoughtfully, to think of it.

Bessy Calverton repaired to St. Owen’s church on the following morning, and saw Mr. Parslow take Mary Davis for better, for worse. Bessy offered her hearty blessing on the marriage too, and poured a host of well-wishes into Mary’s ear as she kissed her after the ceremony and held her to her heart. She felt that it might be a long parting between them after that day ; that the time might never come when they should meet again. Marriage separates friends and kindred every day, and a new road in life ever starts from the altar. Bessy felt that Mary Davis’s happiest life was coming, and amidst her own

hopes there was some doubt whither her own journey might lead.

“ I shall look out for a little place in the country near us,” said Mary Davis ; and Bessy smiled and thanked her, though she thought it was not likely ever to be realized. And Mary Davis, before she left that church, slipped into Bessy’s hands the thirty pounds that they had spoken of ; and Bessy, with a heightened colour, took it, and resolved to pay back every farthing of the money as soon as possible. It was her first loan ; and the first loan gives always an unpleasant sensation to the borrower.

Bessy parted with them all at the church door, and received manifold blessings on her head : her father was fidgety in her absence, and she would be glad to return to him, although it was a step that might be taking her from her best friends for ever.

There was a crowd of idlers round the church doors, and she pushed her way through

it in her haste. For a moment, as in a dream, she fancied she was face to face with Lotty ; but the face vanished away before she could recover her surprise, and try to see more clearly through her blinding tears. She gazed anxiously round, but no sign of the lost sister presented itself. At the corner of the street leading to her father's lodging she paused again ; but there was no Lotty. The old friends were coming out of church, and the people were hustling each other to see the bride, and wish joy, one or two of them, to their minister, as she turned and made her first step on the unknown road.

## CHAPTER IV.

## U P - H I L L   W O R K .

WAS it hallucination, that face of Lotty Calverton's in the crowd round the church doors of St. Owen? It was strange; but Bessy could not shake off the impression when she reached home, or refrain from blaming herself for not making further search. It must have been fancy, she thought, despite the idea that began to suggest itself that it was the face of Lotty, with two years more care impressed upon it, and yet not two years more of that recklessness which, from her long silence, might be feared. Ah! it must have been

fancy, she resolved at last ; and in the sober, stern reality before her, she must indulge no more in fancies !

It had been a morning of fancies, for the matter of that, and the events that had taken place within it had engendered them. She could imagine how differently things might have been, had it not been ordered otherwise by the Ruler of all events that sway our lives, and make or mar us. What a different wedding there might have been in that old church, and what a different part she might have played in it !

But she had a new part to play now ; and she turned to it with her characteristic energy, and flagged not, despite the adverse current that set in at times, and would have borne one of weaker faith away. The great task was before her, and the stubborn scholar did not care to learn—perhaps grew more callous as his strength and old selfishness came back.

Richard was almost himself again a month after the departure of the newly-married couple to their country home ; a little shaky at times about the knees, and subject to a swimming in the head, which aggravated him and made him swear. He kept up appearances still, if in a less degree ; for Bessy Calverton was useful to him, and he could not see his way clearly without her help and guidance.

Bessy and her father were then living in the little shop for which the thirty pounds were borrowed—a poor specimen of a fancy repository, that Bessy thought might make a stand, and realize an independence some day. Bessy had had time to practice fancy work during her stay at St. Owen's Terrace, and specimens of her crotchet work and embroidery filled the window, and were offered in vain to the denizens of a poor neighbourhood, Tothill Street way—a strange place for a fancy repository, where fancy abided not, and all the graces of life had been starved out by those

who strove hard to keep the wolf from the door.

Still, it had been necessary to leave White-chapel; the propinquity to the locale of the "El-Dorado" rendered Richard Calverton nervous, and he would prefer a neighbourhood where Bessy was not better known than himself. He breathed a little freer when he was living near Tothill Street, and had persuaded Bessy, much against her will, to paint the name of Richards over the door.

"Fancy writing up Calverton in capital letters," he said; "isn't it as bad as saying, 'Here's the man who ran away from the Bermudas—step in, and collar him'! Richard's the name, Bess."

"We begin with a falsehood," said Bessy.

"Well, try the other if you like, and see how soon a policeman will call to ask if Mr. Calverton's at home."

There was force in this reasoning, and Calverton was not a very common name; so

Richards was painted over the shop-front, and Bessy began business.

Richard Calverton kept to the back-parlour all day, and only ventured forth of an evening, as he had promised himself, when all things were settled. He was very content just then, with nothing on his mind, no business to trouble him, and a daughter who studied his little wishes, and tried to make him comfortable. She worried him with that bible of hers, and the questions she put to him afterwards to make sure that he had been paying attention—and how she did talk of his future state to be sure, as if it were not his business more than her own, and she could not leave it alone! He had not been prepared for a pious daughter when he first went in search of her after his abrupt departure from the hands of a paternal government; she had not been so full of texts, and psalms, and hymns when she ran away from the "El-Dorado"—whom on earth did she take after? It was

not himself or her mother, who died in Brixbank Prison—he supposed it was that one-eyed Methodist fellow, on whom he stole a march so many years ago. Well, he supposed he must put up with it, and pretend to be interested and pious—it seemed to please her; and “if she took the huff,” as he expressed himself, why she might leave him in the lurch at last.

Bessy, who had long been in the habit of making her own dresses neatly and with good taste, began to think, as the “fancy articles” became brown in the windows, that she had better “do a little dressmaking” to keep the home together, and her father applauded the motive, and thought it very praiseworthy.

Bessy announced that new branch of business on an embossed card in the window, and as the terms were moderate, even for Tothill Street, and people in Tothill Street must dress in some sort of fashion according to Act of Parliament, why Bessy found work accu-

mulate on her hands, and the time less at her disposal for the moral education of him who lived on her labours.

“ You must read the bible to yourself now, father,” said Bessy, “ whilst I work at my new profession.”

“ Certainly, Bess—pitch it over here, girl !”

And Richard Calverton, having the bible in his hands, feigned an intense interest until his eyes grew heavy, and his head made sudden dives, and the bible fell at last with a crash into the fender. Bessy asked him to read aloud after that; but he still nodded, and dropped the book, and it was a hard effort to keep him attentive. Bessy sorrowfully acknowledged to herself, that the result of all her efforts was not quite satisfactory, when three months had been spent in that shop, and the first quarter’s rent came round. She was working hard to make up the rent; and it was not till five weeks in the new quarter that the landlord’s claim was

satisfied, and the receipt proudly filed and hung up in the back parlour, along with the poor's rate and house duty.

“We're out of debt, father.”

“Hum—yes.”

“I don't know what we shall do for the next quarter, though,” said Bessy, with a sigh; “here are five weeks gone already.”

“But there's plenty of work,” said Calverton; “and you are not the girl to be afraid of it?”

He had not observed how thin Bessy was becoming, and how all her colour had long since vanished away from her cheeks. He thought Bessy wanted encouragement, and he gave it freely with all his heart, and smoked an extra pipe of tobacco that afternoon as a tribute to the satisfactory manner in which his daughter had squared the rent.

“No, I'm not afraid of work,” said Bessy, in answer to his last question.

“And there are your rich friends in the

country, to stand another thirty pounds, Bess."

"But I have not put by one pound off the first loan yet," cried Bessy, indignantly; "and am ashamed to write my apologies with every letter that I send them."

"They never expected that thirty pounds back, you may depend upon it, Bess," said Calverton. "I would not say anything more about it."

Bessy did not reason further with her father; her heart was heavy that afternoon, consequently her reasoning faculties somewhat dull. She had toiled and striven hard for Richard Calverton, and her reward had not arrived yet, although she prayed for it every night at her bedside. She was not beginning to despair, for she was a young woman of great faith, and she knew what a hard nature she had to deal with. But if only he would show some signs to give her hope; even a greater interest in her—a greater proof of the love she was so anxious to win! She was

content to sacrifice her life for him ; she had chosen her path, and would follow it to the end ; but if some hope for all her labours were to shine upon her as she toiled along the weary up-hill road, with how much greater cheerfulness of heart would she proceed thereon !

Bessy became despondent after a time ; he seemed to go still further back, despite her struggles, his hypocrisy. More than once, lately, he had mourned the past "El-Dorado" times ; and though he suffered Bessy's re-proof, he did not show any signs of being impressed by it.

"If there were only a little more money coming in to make you comfortable, Bess," he said, one day.

"I do not want money!" cried Bessy, almost petulantly.

"To think of the little bit of money I had once," moaned he, "and the little bit I was putting by ; and now the old woman drinking

it all away, and I daren't try and stop her for an instant! It's all that two-faced devil's fault—that brother of mine, Charles Edwin. I wish I had him by the throat over a deep river!"

"Father, I will not hear it!" and Bessy started up with a flushed cheek and heaving bosom. "Am I working and suffering to see your past brutal nature become more apparent every day? I will not hear it!—I will not have it!"

Richard Calverton was never destined to be his old self again; he cowered before Bessy's honest indignation, and whimpered forth that he did not mean what he said; it was only his fun, just to try Bessy—she did not mind him having a little bit of fun now and then—it wasn't often that he felt in the humour.

Bessy cried herself to sleep that night—might have cried all the next day only business was brisk, and she was required on a dress-making expedition to a tradesman in

the neighbourhood, whose daughter was going to an evening party, and wished to surprise her friends and acquaintances with a dress that a duchess would have thought twice about purchasing if she were of an economical turn of mind.

Richard Calverton always objected to these dressmaking missions away from the business ; he had never surmounted his aversion to the daylight—it was unconquerable. Bessy was sometimes absent four, five or six hours, and during that time he had to attend to the shop, and wait on the customers that strayed in occasionally. Certainly, take one day with another of Bessy's departure, and the average of customers was about two—sometimes a dirty little girl with a mania for fancy work, and a contempt for shoes and stockings, would purchase a penny crotchet-hook ; or a servant maid would bring in her new piece of merino, and state that she would call in the evening to be measured ; but there was nothing to

alarm Mr. Calverton. Nevertheless, he saw Bessy depart that morning with evident reluctance; he did not see that a few shillings more or less mattered so much, that he should be exposed to public gaze for six or seven hours, and perhaps be recognized by some one, and walked off to a place that he inelegantly termed "quod." He even swore once about it, to make his remarks a little more forcible; and Bessy left with tears in her eyes, and with a something like anger in her heart.

She mastered her anger, however, and came back to kiss the old brute, and to hope he would not think she was unmindful of his anxiety, although she did not believe—she added reassuringly—that there was any just ground for his fears.

Richard Calverton, left to himself after Bessy's departure, smoked sundry pipes of tobacco, and then wandered about the parlour and the two upstairs bed-rooms, looking for the remains of a bottle of brandy, that Bessy

had put away somewhere for cases of emergency. He discovered the bottle at last, in a cupboard in his daughter's room, and tilted it to the light, and swore fluently at the paucity of fluid which it contained, and which was disposed of at one gulp. Then he managed to neatly pick the lock of Bessy's private drawer, and count the little store of money she was putting by for next quarter's rent; and being honest Dick no longer, to surreptitiously extract two shillings from the small hoard, by way of pocket-money, of which she kept him awfully short.

Proceeding down stairs with the two shillings in his pocket, he wished some juvenile customer would come in now, that he might induce him or her to fetch him a quartern or a quartern and a-half of brandy, just to keep him lively till Bessy came back. Once his love for brandy so nearly overcame his discretion, that he put on his hat and went to the door with the black bottle under his

arm ; and then a glance through the glass-door at the bright daylight beyond, sent him shuddering back to his arm-chair, wherein he ensconced himself for just a little think before dinner.

This little think, or the drop of brandy, or the extra allowance of tobacco with which he had indulged himself, brought on a state of somnolency that jerked his head divers ways, till it finally fell forward on his chest, and reposed there in a quiescent state of ugliness. And whilst thus reposing, the street-door was opened, and some one came quietly stealing in, and, after closing the door as quietly, advanced towards the parlour and peered over the little blind at the sleeping man, for whose repentance Bessy Calverton was slaving out her life.

After a long survey of Bessy's father, the handle of the door was turned, and the intruder passed from the shop to the inner sanctum, and stood a few paces from the sleeper, whose time to waken had not come yet.

Richard Calverton was indulging in a very pleasant dream, when a thin hand was put forth to touch him on the shoulder—a dream of an impossible future, with himself the grand Swell that he had fancied once upon a time would be the apex of his fortunes. Heavens ! what a tiger and a cabriolet he had, and how he was dashing along Regent Street, with other swells on the pavement putting up their eye-glasses and regarding his “turn out” with envy. Everything conspired to render that a happy dream ; Charles Edwin had fallen on his back crossing the road, and he was about to ride triumphantly over the pit of his stomach, when the hand fell on his shoulder, and he started up, glared at the face looking closely into his, and sank back again, as though at the presence of a danger which as yet he did not clearly comprehend.

“ Lotty—Lotty !” he gasped twice, and then sat speechlessly regarding her.

## CHAPTER V.

## NEMESIS.

IT was a strange meeting, after three years of separation between that father and daughter. It foreboded evil to the ease and comfort of the former, that father felt assured, as Lotty stood there looking at him. Richard Calverton had not paid much attention to his daughter's looks in the last days of the "El-Dorado," but it suggested itself then that she was deathly white, and that her great fiery eyes alone had life in them.

"You know me?" she asked, in a low tone, and with her lips compressed, as

though repressing an effort to speak with greater force ; “ I have not changed so much but that you recollect me ? ”

“ I recollect you , ” answered Richard Calverton .

“ Do you recollect the new part I played at the ‘ El-Dorado ’ after your daughter Bessy came from Wales ? ”

Calverton looked dreamily at Lotty , but did not comprehend .

“ The part of her saviour , defending her feebly , but with all the moral strength that you had left me , from the dangers into which you thrust her , from the villany and temptation that cast me on the streets before *her* time . I don’t think , man , I played that part so badly , considering that I foiled you . ”

“ You were always against me , ” said he , in the tone of a man who had been injured ; “ but what do you want here ? —how did you find me out ? ”

“ I have not lost sight of you for nearly

four months now," replied Lotty; "day after day I have watched your house and dogged your steps. Since I discovered Bessy was left in London by her friends—and rare friends they were to have left her there!—I sought the reason, and found *you*."

"Well!" asked Calverton, with a half defiant, half anxious glance towards his daughter.

"You had broken from the hands of justice and escaped," said Lotty, losing more self-command, and betraying, by her agitated face and trembling hands, the passion that consumed her; "with a price upon your coward's head you came to London, and, like a coward, sought help from one you had striven hard to injure; and by some lie or other—it must have been a lie!—touched her young heart, and led her to believe in your repentance. You were never a man; and there is something so beneath all manliness in living here, and letting her kill herself by inches to support you, that I have come to stop it!"

“ You!” and Richard Calverton, with an oath, sprang to his feet and looked dangerous.

“ You would murder me if you dared!” said Lotty, standing her ground boldly; “ if I had not a friend waiting without, to whom I have given directions how to act, do you think I should have ventured here alone? Do you think I have forgotten,” she cried bitterly, “ all the love and kindness and fatherly affection you have borne me from a child ?”

Calverton sat down again, and clasped one hand within the other, baffled. His fierce looks vanished, and his colour changed, and his heart—it *was* the heart of a coward—beat faster with his fear.

“ Have you come to give me up to the police,” he asked; “ is it so bad as that—my own daughter !”

“ I have come to save Bessy Calverton,” said Lotty; “ whatever consequences may lie in the way, I shall not consider them for one.

Say that, to set her free, I have to ask the law to take you prisoner again, do you think for a moment I should study you in saving her?"

"Your own father," reminded Calverton.

Lotty stamped with her foot as he said that; his new airs of sentiment, that had had some effect on his younger daughter, only enraged this woman, who stood there his Nemesis.

"I disown you!" she cried—"I will not have you for my father! You cast me from your love years ago, and gave me hate, and taught me hatred in return! There is only one I love in all the world, and for her sake I'm here!"

Richard Calverton made no reply to this. He was dumb-founded—he could not understand her reasons yet. The first surprise over—the first impulse, perhaps, to save his life at any cost, quelled by Lotty's firmness—he sat there stupefied. He could

not believe that she had come to give him up to justice; she would not have prefaced that intention with so many hard words—she would have not stood there in that room. But he waited anxiously for the true meaning to resolve itself from all this wilderness of words.

“For the sake of Bessy Calverton, who struggled longer than myself against temptation, having been taught God’s word in a youth more innocent than mine—for the sake of Bessy Calverton, who offered me her love, and tried to love a wretch like me—who turned me from a tigress to a woman! To her I am indebted for a better, purer life, if one more hard and killing—and for her sake I come back to sweep from out her path the shadow of her life!”

Calverton caught at a chance here greedily.

“Bessy loves her father for his own altered state. It is her study to see him profit by her teachings—to stir up in him, Lotty, thoughts of repentance. Oh, such thoughts!”

100% 70%

70% 40%

40% 20%

20% 10%

10% 5%

5% 2%

2% 1%

1% 0.5%

0.5% 0.2%

0.2% 0.1%

0.1% 0.05%

0.05% 0.02%

0.02% 0.01%

0.01% 0.005%

0.005% 0.002%

0.002% 0.001%

0.001% 0.0005%

0.0005% 0.0002%

0.0002% 0.0001%

0.0001% 0.00005%

0.00005% 0.00002%

0.00002% 0.00001%

0.00001% 0.000005%

0.000005% 0.000002%

0.000002% 0.000001%

0.000001% 0.0000005%

... the influence is  
... **acute** and blinding

itself to believe in reparation—away from the daughter you will never see again in this life—mark my words ! ”

“ I—I have nowhere to go ! ” and Richard Calverton’s face blanched more and more, and his teeth chattered in his head.

“ Will you come ? — or shall I proclaim your lurking-place to that world which will be glad to hunt you down ? ”

“ You—you wouldn’t do that ? ”

“ I’ll have no mercy ! ” cried Lotty, flinging open the parlour door and stepping into the little shop. “ If you hesitate a moment, I’ll proclaim you. If you ever dream for a moment of coming back here, I’ll proclaim you. If you try one scheme to thwart me in the purpose I have formed, I’ll give you up, so help my God ! ”

Calverton rose, took his hat from a peg behind the door, and followed her into the shop.

“ I shall be known in the streets now—if you will only wait till night ! ”

“There is a cab-stand a few paces off, and I will not wait a moment.”

“Where are we going?”

“You are going abroad — you leave to-morrow.”

“Damn——” began Calverton.

“You leave this evening for Australia. I have abused a trust placed in me, and made use of money given for another purpose to buy your passage out. You are entered by the name you have placed over this shop-front, and you are behind time now, the rest of the passengers being aboard. You will be watched till the ship sails ; at Gravesend and Liverpool you will be watched also, and if you step on land one instant you will be arrested. I have sworn it, and I will keep my oath !”

“I’ve no money,” he muttered ; “what am I to do in Australia without money?”

“This is all I can spare,” and she placed a few sovereigns in his hand ; “it will keep you

for a day or two, until you procure work."

"I shall die of starvation."

"Will you come?"

"Lotty there *is* a little money upstairs," he suggested, in a husky voice; "and if Bessy knew I was going, I'm sure she'd give it cheerfully. Oh! dear, what is to become of your poor old father abroad!"

"You must take your chance, like men more honest than yourself," was the stern reply; "there is no lack of work there, and you are well acquainted with the country. Are you coming?"

"But the money upstairs?"

"Shall not be touched."

Calverton groaned, but he made no further effort at delay. He followed Lotty to the street door, where she beckoned to a little girl of ten or eleven years of age, and told her to mind the shop till Miss Richards's return, and not forget the letter; and then she passed her arm through his, without a word.

What a difference to that other daughter's gentle manner, when she walked out with him—and what a walk to take! It was all over with his luck now—fate set in dead against him, like a sea, and swamped him utterly! He had no power to resist, with that terrible threat hanging above his head, and that terrible oath, which assured him how sternly, how remorselessly, that woman would keep her word, ringing in his ears. He gave in, and submitted, and thought no more of struggling against her. He sat in the cab by her side, and reflected on the duty of children to their parents, and "the serpent's tooth" that had buried itself deep in his heart. It was not so bad as it might have been—bad enough as it was. If so wild and reckless a daughter knew the secret of his stay in London, why he was better beyond the reach of the law; and Australia would be a nice place for him—if he did not die of sea-sickness on the passage out: he should never forget that journey to

the Bermudas to the longest day of *his* life.

Presently he was in the close, narrow streets bordering on the Thames ; finally, stumbling his way about the London Docks, very nervous at each glance directed towards him and his companion. In that broad daylight, with so many people passing and re-passing, he felt it would be salvation to reach the ship and settle down.

He crossed from ship to ship, and went nervously and in haste along the planks between them, and reached the Australian vessel at last, and breathed again, and took off his hat to wipe the damp sweat from his forehead.

“Are you safe now?”

“Yes.”

“The steward will tell you Mr. Richards’s berth. Here is your claim to it, and your board.” And she thrust some papers in his hand.

He did not answer ; the rapidity of her movements had bewildered him too much.

“I am going now. You will remember all I—I have warned you of?”

“You will not say anything against me now?” he muttered.

“Whilst you are here—you are safe.”

She laid her hand upon his shoulder, and looked full into his face. He did not know her then, she looked so strangely at him.

“You and I will never meet again—shall we part as friends or enemies? If in this parting it will do you any good to hear I forgive all the past, I say that freely. If parting thus you can believe that I might feel more happy to hear you say, ‘I believe you did it for the best’—say it!”

“No,” and he turned away, stubborn to the last.

“Shall I take your thanks to her who is an angel on earth compared to you and me, for all the sacrifices she has made?”

“She has done me no good—why should I thank her?”

Lotty moved away, and he followed her, saying, in his old cringing tone, " You are not offended ? If you're going off to split upon me, I'll say, ' God bless you, and forgive you.' I'll send a thousand thanks to Bess."

" I will not take your blessing or your thanks now, father," was the reply ; " they will do no one any good, when they spring from fear instead of love. I'll keep your secret—sleep peacefully on that assurance till you dream of treachery."

So the strange father and daughter parted, never, as Lotty had prophesied, to meet again. From that day the man, whose heart no love could touch, passed on his way to the new world, and was heard of no more by those who have their names enrolled in this history. Lotty, firm and resolved in her purpose, waited all that day near the Docks, till a steam-tug took the ship down the Pool ; went by train to Gravesend, and waited there, distrustful of her father, till the ship sailed

away ; again repaired to Liverpool, and spent five days upon the quay, wandering up and down, and asking questions of those who came on shore concerning Mr. Richards, who kept so closely to his berth, and objected so strongly to the daylight. But Mr. Richards had faith in Lotty's obduracy of temperament, and, fearful of apprehension, made no struggle against the destiny that took him from his native land.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SISTERS.

BESSY CALVERTON, arriving home late that evening, paused in the shop with her hand to her heart, and gazed with a look of dismay at the little girl behind the counter. She had given one hasty glance towards the parlour, where the well-known figure of her father was not, and then stopped to collect her ideas, and prepare herself for the great shock that she felt was in store for her.

“If you please, are you Miss Richards?” asked the child.

“Yes—yes—what has happened?”

“ I have been told to mind the shop till you came back, but no one has called, Miss Richards.”

“ Who told you ? ”

“ Lotty Calverton.”

Bessy panted with this new surprise. Was it all a troubled dream ?—and should she wake up presently, and find that she had fallen asleep over her needlework, and that her father sat in the old place before her ? No—it was not a dream, albeit the incidents of her waking life were strange and perplexing.

“ I was told to give you this letter, Miss,” said the child ; “ Lotty Calverton lodges with mother, and she wrote it before she left this morning.”

“ Did—did Lotty Calverton go away with Mr. Richards ? ” asked Bessy, as she took the letter with a nervous hand.

“ Yes, Miss,” was the answer.

Bessy broke the seal in haste, to arrive at the solution of the mystery, and her eager

eyes devoured the contents of the hurriedly written missive.

It ran as follows :—

“ DEAR BESSY,—I have made up my mind to end your present unhappy life. It is a mistake—it is killing you. I, who know our father so much better than yourself, know there is no changing him—that he was born bad, and will die so. It will be all altered when this note reaches your hand ; it will be all explained when we meet in a few days. Have patience, and trust in me. God bless you.

“ LOTTY.”

Bessy sat more bewildered than ever after this letter had been read ; it suggested so much, and threw light upon so little. That Lotty had stepped from the crowd in which for so long a time she had been lost was certain ; but whether for good or evil, she dared scarcely ask herself. Certainly not for good, for she had stepped between her and the one task for which she was working hope-

fully, believing the reward for all her perseverance would come some day—God's blessing on her labour. She had lost all thought of self in that task, and to have it snatched from her was disheartening—was even cruel, for she should have been warned, and asked if she had wished it.

And now her father was gone, and the labour ended, and she left to mourn his absence and the futility of all her efforts to save him. She had never sounded to the depths of that father's character, and did not know how vain all those efforts would have been—she saw herself, in the first moments of grief, deprived of one who she fancied might have learned to love her and believe in her had time been mercifully given him. For an instant the thought that Lotty had betrayed him to justice seized her, and stopped her heart beating; and then she turned away from so cruel a suspicion, and did Lotty Calverton more justice.

But it was terrible to remain passive, and wait days for the clue to the mystery by which she was surrounded.

Still there was no help for it, and Bessy struggled with her anxiety, and counted every hour of the long days. She bought a newspaper every morning also, and scanned eagerly its columns, and breathed more freely when the name of Richard Calverton, *alias* Richards, appeared not there to affright her.

Bessy could never afterwards remember those nine or ten days which were spent in that deserted house—how they passed, or in what manner. They were days of fear and suspense, wherein her needle lay idle, and in which her thoughts were confused and troubled. No incident, not even a new customer, occurred to relieve that monotony of uncertainty which robbed her of her appetite, and turned her paler than before.

Lotty came at last. Late in the evening,

when the boy who called to put the shutters up had fulfilled his task and departed, this strange sister who had for so long a time been lost, suddenly appeared as Bessy was crossing the yard to shut the door.

Bessy Calverton had been so long alone in that house, shut up with her own thoughts, that she gave a cry of joy at seeing Lotty, and ran into her arms. In the first moments of meeting, she could feel no anger against her who had acted for the best in her own judgment.

“Oh! Lotty, Lotty, why did you keep away from me so long?” was her only reproof, as she clasped her wandering sister in her arms.

The first emotion subsided, the street door closed, and the sisters in that little back parlour, Lotty placed a hand on each shoulder of Bessy and held her at arm’s length.

“Let me see how you bear the world’s rough work, and how the task you set yourself has altered you. Don’t speak!”

They looked at each other for a moment intently, sadly—both could see a change. Bessy alone felt that the change in Lotty was for the better. The face of Lotty was pinched and worn, but the defiant look that had been its characteristic had departed, and in its place were a sadness and a deepness of thought which rendered her less stern.

“Well, Bessy, are you not going to heap upon me all your reproaches? Let me have them, and recover from them before I explain.”

When they were seated together, with Lotty’s hand on her sister’s arm, Bessy said—

“Let me know what I have to reproach you for, Lotty? All is darkness and mystery with me yet.”

“Coming back from Liverpool this afternoon, I thought if it would not be better to keep away from here, and spare you such a meeting. I could but give you pain, I rea-

soned, and the first shock over you were learning resignation."

"I was dying with suspense," said Bessy.

"Well, I came on, Bessy," said Lotty; "I could not resist the desire to see you for the last time."

"The last time!"

"Ay—but I will talk of that presently. Now of Richard Calverton."

Bessy, with suspended breath, had clutched Lotty's arm in her turn, and changed colour. She was to know the very worst then, and she had feared it and held back.

"Richard Calverton has left for Australia," said Lotty—"at my wish—forced by my will, which held him fast, and would not suffer him to turn."

"He wished to stay then? Oh, Lotty!"

"Yes, he wished to stay—to be kept by you, and worked for and caressed in his old age, as though he had been a father or a friend to you all his life."

“But, Lotty, he *had* altered,” said Bessy ; “he was no longer the father we feared—he was learning to repent.”

“He was learning to deceive you !” cried Lotty ; “nothing better or more noble was in his thoughts than that. Had I believed there was a change in him—there was even a hope of change—I might have paused ; but there was no hope, and you were dying for him.”

“I would have died happy,” said Bessy—“for there *was* hope, Lotty ; and in your precipitation you have deceived yourself.”

“You were giving up your life for him,” cried Lotty, with the old vehemence ; “all your youth, your future, was being cursed by him, and I said weeks ago it should not be. I had not helped you to fly from him in times past, to sit patiently down, and see all the evil from which you had escaped surrounding you once more. You were in danger, and I have saved you from it. I don’t expect you to be

grateful," and that short disagreeable laugh of times past grated on Bessy's ears again.

"Lotty," said Bessy, gravely, "how did you know there was no change in him? Could you see so much better than myself into the workings of his heart?—you at a distance, and I so near?"

"You were blinded by your wishes, and I was distrustful and ever on the watch," said Lotty. "Months ago, when I found you left in London by the minister and that Mary Davis you have always thought so much of, I knew no good could come of it, for I knew that father of ours was wholly bad and could not mend. Still, I watched and gave him time; and when I saw him drifting back to all his old bad thoughts, despite your efforts, Bessy, I stopped it."

"His old bad thoughts?" slowly repeated Bessy.

"In the nights when you were busy here, and he left this house alone, I have dogged

his steps and seen how vile he was. I have followed him from gin-shop to gin-shop, where he has spent the little money he could beg or steal from you ; and I have seen him lurking round the house of his brother, praying—I could swear he was praying !—for a chance of paying off the grudge he has borne him for three years.”

“ Oh ! Lotty, Lotty—not that ! ”

“ He knew his address by some means ; he went there more than once ; he hid in the shadow of some trees that overhung the foot-path opposite his brother’s house. Was it love that took him there ? ”

“ Oh, my God ! after all my prayers and hopes ! ” cried Bessy, bursting into tears, and rocking herself to and fro like a child.

“ Ah ! it’s hard,” said Lotty—“ hard to know it, hard to tell it. And I don’t spare you, because you won’t mourn for him after the first shock’s over, and you’ll see that he was no less a wretch than when he tried to

blight you first of all. He would have murdered me the day I came here in your defence ; he would have robbed you of your savings, had I consented to it."

And Lotty related those particulars of her interview with her father detailed in our preceding chapter, sparing not Bessy, as she had said, and showing, in her passionate words and by her excited manner, how the recital affected her, and roused her angry feelings.

" And it's all done now," she concluded ; " and, thank God, there's no help for it. I have striven hard to take that blot from your path before I go—and you won't thank me," she added, fretfully.

" You think not of the blow it has been for me ; you are not sorry for me. You exult over all the evil in our father's heart !"

" Bessy, I can't be sorry that you are quit of him," said Lotty ; " and I can't feel any love for a man who has never been a father

to me. I forgave him all the injury he had done me before I left him—and that was more than I thought I ever should do in this life."

" You did not part in anger, then ?" asked Bessy.

" No."

" And what did he say of me before you left him ?"

Lotty answered evasively ; that last instance of ingratitude she would have spared Bessy, had Bessy not pressed the question, and implored her to tell all. Then the truth came out, and Bessy covered her face with her hands, and cried bitterly again—she saw the hopeless nature of that task which she had set herself, and how it would have ended for her.

" Lotty, you will not leave me to-night, with all these dark and cruel thoughts," she said, after a pause.

Lotty was sitting with her hands clasped

before her, dreamily regarding the fancy fire-paper that Bessy had made.

“I am misunderstood.”

“No, no,” cried Bessy, “I can understand your motives, Lotty—they were all actuated by your love for me—but I cannot rejoice over them, and I can only thank you for that love.”

“That’s all I want; and if you don’t think it best to be rid of a bad father—you will when you think of it more quietly. Perhaps he will succeed in Australia,” Lotty suggested, as a thought likely to make matters a little less gloomy; but Bessy shook her head, and replied not.

“I have no particular work at home,” said Lotty; “I’ll stay here till to-morrow, and postpone our last parting.”

Bessy thanked her.

“To-morrow I must talk about you, Bessy, and what is to become of you.”

“If we were to live together, Lotty, you and I—I think——”

“Ah! another wild idea of reformation,” cried Lotty—“another shadow to darken your life—that’s like you! But, Bessy, my life’s planned out—I am going to America.”

“I will go with you!” cried Bessy; “what have I to live for here? I am entirely alone.”

“You will get on better alone than with me for a companion,” was the answer. “I may have altered—I *have* altered—but I have not your thoughts, and my path must be a different one to yours. I may be a better woman somewhat—just a trifle—but I shall never be a good one.”

“How have you lived?” asked Bessy, timidly.

“For the last two years I have been a needlewoman—working day and night for little else than bread and water,” answered Lotty. “I chose it of my own free will, perhaps, as penance, like the Catholics—perhaps because the old life was awful and

murderous—perhaps because I had a sister who I thought might love me more if I were better, instead of turning against me when I acted for her good!"

It was the old jealousy of the "El-Dorado" time, but it was not its sullenness and hardness. There was anxiety to be loved in the tones, not a reckless indifference to any one's affection.

"Dear Lotty, I *do* love you more!" cried Bessy. "Oh! Lotty, I must have some one to love—you will not go abroad?"

"We'll talk of this to-morrow," said Lotty, as Bessy's arms stole round her neck; "you are tired and distressed, and I'll say no more to-night. You wouldn't think now," with the forced laugh again, "that I wanted to sit up and read a bit, after such a journey from Liverpool as I have had?"

"Read?" repeated Bessy.

Lotty drew from her pocket a small dog-eared, discoloured volume, and held it towards Bessy.

“ Mary Davis’s bible !” cried Bessy ; “ and you read it still, Lotty—you have not set it aside, as you threatened ?”

“ No—I couldn’t do that—I tried once or twice, but somehow, it wouldn’t do, girl,” was the answer ; “ and when it began to give me hope that even the worst of us can be saved—I suppose nobody thought of Richard Calverton when this was written—”

“ Hush, hush !”

“ When it began to give me hope,” continued Lotty, “ I stopped short in my sins, and said, I will try something else, and if I die over it I’ll die the better for it.”

Bessy’s arms tightened round her.

“ And when I thought I was dying of starvation, I read the one chapter where all is promised that I speak of, and thought I should be glad to die. I always read that—nothing else but that—and I am going to read it now.”

And Bessy left her reading it, and went up

stairs to wait for Lotty, to thank God for the change in her, and to pray that a time might come to him who was now upon the seas, when God's word should teach him even yet the love and penitence against which his heart was steeled.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LOTTY DEFENDS BESSY.

LOTTY CALVERTON did not part from her sister the next day, or the next. Bessy was ill and weak, and required help; and however firm Lotty might be in her resolves, she could not leave Bessy with those wan looks, which were almost akin to despair.

On the third day, when Bessy seemed stronger, Lotty spoke of both their futures —of her own in the first instance.

“I said I was going abroad, Bessy,” she said; “perhaps I spoke in the heat of the moment, and without much thought as to my

chance. For I have had my chance, and thrown it away."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing—nothing. Thrown away in a good cause, and the friend who offered it will believe so, hearing my story. I may not go abroad now, for I must not expect two chances in life; but I cannot live with you, Bessy. Whatever happens, it is not right."

"Tell me why, Lotty," urged Bessy; "all the old reasons cannot avail now."

"There is so little true penitence in the world," said Lotty, "that I can't expect the world to believe in mine—I don't ask it. But I *can* expect, if you and I were to become sisters, Bessy, that world to point its finger at you, and give you a share of its sneers and its lies."

"I am not afraid of the world," said Bessy, proudly; "and in a world across the sea we may—"

"We may *not*," interrupted Lotty. "Do

not reason with me on that which cannot, *must* not happen, for the sake of Bessy Calverton. Your life will be a brighter one without me."

Bessy shook her head.

"You have passed through all the dark troubles that have beset you, and the light must come now—you have waited patiently, and God will reward you, Bessy."

"A sister's love and confidence be that reward, Lotty," cried Bessy; "I wish none other now."

"You will join Mr. Parslow in the country—he and his wife will give you a home, and make you happy. When the minister's wife was that Mary Davis you were always happy with *her*."

Lotty saw Bessy's colour change at this half reproach, and said hastily—

"You must not mind all I say, Bessy—I never could get over that girl, although I tried hard not to be jealous of her love for

you. There, she's a good woman—and never a word against her will you hear me utter again. She has been a friend to you, and I am grateful—though its my nature to be a little jealous—Bessy?"

Bessy looked towards her.

" You said once you loved me the best, though—that *was* true, Bessy—eh ?"

" Yes."

" Well, though I don't deserve it, I'm your sister. And you have said it again ; and when we are apart I'll think of it, and feel happy for the thought. Now, Bessy," said Lotty, " understand that we can't live together—it is impossible. For your own sake—God knows, not for mine!—I wish it. Still, I must trust you by yourself in London for a few weeks, till you hear from me—I wish that, for a reason of my own."

Bessy said she had no intention of leaving London yet awhile ; and added, that if there were an opportunity of earning her living in

that neighbourhood, she would stay there and be independent of her friends.

“No—you are too young to live here alone,” said Lotty.

“My knowledge of the world began early.”

“This is slavery.”

“But it is independence; and if you turn away from me, you must leave me to follow my own path.”

Lotty regarded her silently for several moments, then she said—

“We will talk of this in the next meeting—that may be possibly our last. Don’t speak, I say only possibly now. Bessy, I want to speak of something else before I go.” She drew her chair closer to her sister’s, and let her hand rest lightly on her’s. There was something in the action that startled Bessy, and aroused her interest.

“When we met last in that street in Snow-fields, Bessy, I had a hope that your home was fixed for ever there; that one or other of

those brothers might have taken a fancy to you—I cannot think why they did not!—and asked you for a wife. I could have imagined then your settling down by the side of some honest, hard-worker, and making him happy, and being happy in his love. I was so sure that it might happen, that I did not seek you out for sixteen months; and then I went to the same house, and found it deserted, and heard from the neighbours that there had been great changes. Even then, Bessy, I had a belief that you were married, and sought out the Specklands instead of Mr. Parslow, and heard that you were living with Mary Davis, and had left them for upwards of a year. The brother told me that—a tall, dark-skinned, dark-eyed man, with a face that had seen sorrow, or I am no judge of sorrowful faces.”

“Indeed!” responded Bessy.

“And he turned pale when I mentioned your name, Bessy—and had some trouble to become the stern hard man, whose equal I

have never met—and, Bessy, then another fancy seized me."

Bessy did not answer, or ask what it was.

"That other fancy was that you and he had been engaged to be married once, and that something broke it off. And that disturbed me, till one night, when he was absent, I called at the house again, and saw his blind sister—and asked that one question, and"—her hand tightened its hold on Bessy—"found it a cruel truth!"

Bessy looked down to hide some tears that would brim over and run over her pale cheeks, and Lotty watched her nervously.

"Did he speak of me?" she murmured.

"Never a word, Bessy," was the reply; "he did not know that I was your sister—at least, he has never asked my name."

"Have you seen him more than once then?"

"I have met him more than once," she replied, somewhat evasively; "and always with the same dark looks, that stopped all ques-

tioning. But now, Bessy, will you tell me why the engagement was broken off—how it all began and ended?"

"Is it not sufficient that it has ended, and that he thinks no more of me?"

"Bessy—you love him!" cried Lotty, catching her in her arms—"I see that, and am sure of it. Tell me this story before I go—let me hear how the one chance that came to you was thrown away and lost. Is there any reason why I should not hear it?"

"No, no—but it is a painful story, and has been ended long since."

But Lotty persisted; and Bessy, after a short struggle, related the whole tale that she thought for ever to have kept a secret, from the day when Hugh Speckland gave her up. It was opening an old wound, and she drew her breath with pain more than once during its recital, although she gathered firmness as she proceeded, and spoke in a voice less faltering and weak.



“He did not know—he will never know,” she added in conclusion, “that I loved him with my whole heart, when he thought it best to part—that knowing then the depth of his character, and all its nobleness, I could but love him. He did not seek that knowledge, but in his pride and stubbornness cast me from him, and went his way. And I had my pride too—and I—I should have never been happy with him when he had once lost confidence. I did deceive him at the first—and he was a man who forgave not.”

“Ah! a stern man, who would resent a wrong, but who would pardon a weakness,” said Lotty; “it is a pity that you were separated. I think you would have been happy with him. He cast you off too readily, Bessy—but he has not found happiness himself.”

“How do you know that?” asked Bessy, quickly.

“I see him in my neighbourhood now and

then," said Lotty ; " I hear him spoken of occasionally. He is a man who is trying to do good in his way, and with his money ; but it is a strange, unsympathizing way, and I fear he gets few thanks. He has an unmerciful way of doling out his alms, that grates with more than one or two who have been assisted by him."

Bessy said no more concerning him—on the contrary, made haste to quit the topic, and talk no more of that which, rising from the grave of the past wherein past hopes were buried, had so disturbed her with its reminiscence. The sisters spoke of parting again ; and the clock was striking nine when Lotty, disregarding Bessy's wistful appeal, put on her bonnet and shawl.

" I have work to do, and must live by my own labour," said Lotty ; " you will not wish me to remain idle here. Some day hence—perhaps before this week is ended—you will hear from me. Don't feel too lonely about

such a wretch as I am—and believe in the light that must come to you, as I have prophesied!"

But Bessy's heart was heavy, and not inclined to believe in anything brighter than her present lot when Lotty went away that night. Understanding and appreciating as she did the reasons for Lotty's inflexible resolve to live apart from her, she, with her heart yearning for something to love, and study, and beat for, could but regret it, and wish her sister's firmness had been less.

Bessy did not know how much Lotty had kept hidden, or what a struggle it had been to preserve that firmness, and not acquiesce. Lotty knew that Bessy was offering to her that which would make her life a blessing to her; but for Bessy's sake she had repressed all sign, and let the offer pass, though it told of faith, and charity and human love. Lotty did not abandon the neighbourhood of Tothill Street immediately;

she returned to the house five minutes afterwards, and looked anxiously towards the parlour, to make sure that Bessy was not utterly prostrated; and did not leave till her sister was sitting quietly, if thoughtfully, over her work. Then, as if actuated by some new thought, or by some old one that she had repressed till that time, she hurried away, swiftly and surely, on some secret mission. Passing quickly through the crowd upon the footpaths, taking the road when any extra attraction brought people to a standstill, taking short cuts down dark streets to broader thoroughfares, she continued her progress until she stood in one of those turnings out of Oxford-street where the houses are large and imposing, and were rented by well-to-do people before Kensington rose a second time into fashion.

At one of these houses she knocked, and asked of the maid-servant who responded to her summons if Mr. Speckland were within.

Mr. Speckland was at home, but very busy at present; would the young person please to state her business.

“Tell him that Charlotte Calverton has called to speak with him for a moment,” said she; “I think he will see me.”

The maid went upstairs to the first-floor, rented by Mr. Hugh Speckland, engraver, and returned a few minutes afterwards to state that Mr. Speckland would see her if she would step up. Lotty followed the servant into the room, and having been announced, was shut in with that man whom we left last at a dying brother’s side.

It was a large, well-furnished room, having a table by one of the windows, as in the old Seymour Street times. Lotty cast a hasty glance round the room in search of his sister, but she was alone with the worker, who sat intently at his engraving, with the light of the table-lamp full on his face as he pored over his wood-block. A face that had not

altered much, in which the lines might have been deeper perhaps, and on which the old expression of energy, resistance, obduracy—whatever it might be—had settled and hardened.

He looked up for a moment as she approached, and then turned to his work again and said, “Well?”

“I have come to say I give up the idea, Mr. Speckland.”

“Indeed!” was the brief reply.

“That many things have happened that compel me to give it up—sore against my will—and with a hundred thanks to you, sir.”

“Against your will, and yet give it up?” said Hugh.

“It seems strange, but it can’t be helped,” said Lotty; “shall I explain?”

“Yes.”

“In the first place, you will think all your trouble in seeking me—all your kindness after that search was successful—very ill

repaid—for, with the exception of two pounds, I have spent all the money which you lent me for my passage and outfit."

"Well, well—I thought I could have trusted you. No matter." And Hugh, who had expressed his surprise by leaving off his work, resumed it again.

"There are the two pounds," said Lotty, placing it at his side; "some day I may be able to work off the rest of the debt."

She placed on the table beside him a little packet of money, which he swept off with a hasty hand. As it fell at her feet, he said—

"Do you think I give and take, that you so coolly fling the gift back in my face? I tell you again," he added angrily, "that there is no place in England for you, and that in Canada you may begin a new life, and will have those near to watch and encourage you."

"I have betrayed your trust."

"No matter, I am used to it," said Speckland; "I shall trust you no more, but act for

myself. I shall pay for your passage out to-morrow."

"Your sister?"

"Was married to-day, and a week hence will leave for Canada. You will be a foolish girl to reject my offer—you shall not reject it?"

"You are very kind," murmured Lotty.

"Have you altered your mind?" asked Speckland—"you thought the offer a good one when I made it last."

"I thought it salvation—I think so now," said Lotty; "and—and I will take your offer, if you will hear my story, sir, of how that money was lost."

"I am busy," he said, by way of an excuse.

"But you have lost trust in me—you own it," urged Lotty; "and as the money was spent in a strange cause, I should like your opinion of it. Will you hear me, sir?"

"If you wish it," said he; "take a seat."

"Thank you—I will stand, sir."

She moved a little nearer to him as she spoke, as if to watch the effect of her disclosure; and he, ignorant of the strange turn that revelation was to take, sat and worked on calmly.

“ You were good enough to lend me thirty-five pounds; and as you sketched before me a means of repaying that sum by small instalments, I was weak enough to borrow it. The greater part of the money went a few days since in purchasing a passage out for my father.”

“ Your father !” and Hugh leaned back in his chair, and regarded her with astonishment—“ your father in London !—I do not understand.”

“ He had escaped from the Bermudas ; I found him living with—with a sister of mine,” she continued hurriedly ; “ he had flattered her into a belief of his repentance, and was living on her bounty, and suffering her to work her life out to keep him in idleness. She had

taken a little fancy repository near Tothill Street, under a false name, and was dying by inches in his service. Was it wrong to save her?—to compel him to abandon the hold he had upon her, and work on for himself?"

"No—you are a brave woman," he said; and he bent more closely over his work, so that she could see only the masses of hair, that had turned of an iron grey since we met him last in Seymour Street.

There was a long silence, and Lotty with a half-sigh felt the interview had ended. She was moving away when he repeated—

"Dying by inches, Charlotte Calverton! Where is Mr. Parslow?"

"Married, and living in the country."

Until that time he had never mentioned her name, or appeared to have known it or her history. He turned to his work again, and seemed to forget her presence; for after a while he looked up, and was surprised to find her standing there.



“Oh!—good evening to you,” he said; “I did not know you were here still.”

“When shall I see you again, sir?”

“Next week. I shall let you know by letter when the ship sails, and shall meet you on board. Good night.”

“Have I forfeited your confidence now, sir?”

“No,” he answered; “I judged hastily.”

Lotty caught at the words, and came back with a hurried step, and, leaning both hands on the table, looked full into his face. The action struck him as singular, and he looked back at her for an explanation. They were two strange faces at that time.

“You judged hastily once before, sir—I must say it, I will say it, if it lose me my one chance, and all your kindly help. Until to-day I have never known your true history, nor my sister’s. I know it can’t be helped now, sir, and that all is over and gone; but it was still a hasty judgment, and it darkened your life—and you were wrong!”

“What do you mean ?”

“She was my sister, and you loved her. She would have been your wife, and made you happy—only your pride, and anger, and sense of injury thrust her away at the time she loved you best—ay, loved you best on all the earth, sir—I call my God to witness !”

“Woman !” shouted Speckland.

“It is the truth, sir—if I pain you, I can’t help it. You have a right to know it, for the sake of her good name—for the barren life which, with all the light crushed out by you, has fallen to her share. There—I have told you, and am going !”

“One moment—how do you know this ?”

“I heard her story to-day for the first time, sir—I wrenched it from her, after a hard struggle to keep it back.”

“She loved my brother—did she not tell you that ?”

“Ay, she loved him for a while, until she knew you better, and could esteem you more.

And then you blighted her whole life—not willingly, not knowingly, but in a weak moment, when your good angels were away, sir."

"Will you leave me now?" he asked, in a low tone.

Lotty went out of the room at his request, and shut the door upon him, and on the trouble in his heart she had left. And he sat there, silent and motionless, after she had quitted him, as though the shock of the truth had stricken him to stone. It had been a strange, unreal day to him before. His blind sister had been married to the old love, who came from Canada to keep his word, and take her to the home he had made for her; and his estimate of human nature had risen somewhat higher. He had left Lucy happy, and returned to his solitary work, his solitary labour, and the companionship of many thoughts, that were no less bitter for being nourished by himself and in his heart. And the day

had ended in as strange and unreal manner as it had begun—and there he sat struggling with himself and an accusing past.

He took up the graver at last, and balanced it on his finger, and looked at his work ; then he made a movement as if to bend his will to it. But the will was weak that night, and there was a rush of old thoughts and bygone hopes, to sweep upon him and hurry him away from the present. He gave up his task, and buried his head in his arms, and groaned as with a heavy weight upon his soul.

## CHAPTER. VIII.

IN WHICH THE HERO OF THIS STORY MAKES HIS  
FIRST APPEARANCE, AND SEVERAL CHARACTERS  
THEIR LAST.

BESSY CALVERTON spent a dull week in that shop near Tothill Street. For the first time in her life she felt wholly alone in the world. Great as had been her troubles in times past, many as had been the homes which had sheltered her, or from which, for lack of moral shelter, she had been compelled to fly, she had ever had a friend to cling to—some one to comfort and console her in her saddest hours of trial.

And now all was altered, and no voice gave her assuring words, and no face but the stranger looked into hers. The present was the true picture of her future now—dull, and spiritless, and lonely, with never an one to love. Those she loved best had all parted from her, and she remained to battle for existence alone, with a crowd of unsympathizers round her. If Lotty had but only stayed with her, and they had shared life's troubles together — Lotty, her own sister ! They were true companions, and they loved each other, and there was not a great dissimilarity of thought now: why should Lotty have studied so much what the world would say, she who had defied it for so many years ? If for Bessy's sake alone, was it not her wish ? —and had Bessy ever found the world so great a friend, so charitable a master, that she should sink her one chance of happiness, and live on in loneliness for its sake ?

Bessy had many such thoughts as these,



mingled with others concerning her father, Parslow, Mary Davis, and the Specklands—all parted irrevocably from her, and to whom, in the common order of events, there could follow no reunion. For her father had passed from her to his unknown life, and Mr. Parslow and his wife's hospitality she could entrench on no more; and the Specklands—or rather he who ruled them, and was the head thereof—had cast her off, and crushed her self-esteem. Let her live alone, then. The first shock over, would she feel entirely alone with the Father of all to watch her, and His book at her side to offer solace in her hour of need?

Bessy was beginning to think that she should not hear from Lotty again, when a letter in her handwriting reached her. Bessy opened it, and eagerly read its contents. For the first moment she thought there might be some hope therein, until it more plainly developed the firm determination with which she

had left her seven days ago. It spoke of Bessy's loneliness, her sympathy with it, her trust that it would shortly end ; but it spoke also of a wish for a last parting in the emigrant ship, "The Queen," on board of which waited Lotty, to bid her good-bye before she went away in search of a new home. Bessy shed some bitter tears over Lotty's letter : to talk of hope, and pity her loneliness, and then to so firmly prove that there was no love sufficient to conquer the writer's determination, was a mockery to the poor girl, who struggled vainly that night to teach herself submission.

Bessy Calverton shut up her shop the next day, and went by train to Gravesend ; the ship was to sail at three in the afternoon, and Bessy's appointment was for one. And it was striking one as, with a heavy heart, the boat rowed her to the middle of the river where the ship was moored, and where, amidst all the bustle and confusion, it seemed impos-

sible to find her sister Lotty. Amidst the boats that passed and repassed, taking and bringing back disconsolate friends—few of which were to ever meet again by the adamantine laws of separation—Bessy's waterman fought his way, exchanging polite abuse with those who rowed against him, and as dead to all feeling for the sorrow in his track as if he had been Charon rowing souls across the Styx. They are a hard-hearted race, those Gravesend boatmen.

Bessy, after some difficulty, was on board, pushing her way amidst a crowd of friends, relations, and acquaintances, coming up or going down to the between-decks where Lotty was to meet her.

It seemed a long, long time before she was in Lotty's arms at last, and Lotty was struggling to be calm as Bessy sobbed upon her bosom.

“ You are the first who has ever cried for me, or cared for me—and I'm not worth it !”

said Lotty, hoarsely, as she strained her closer;  
“what does it matter what becomes of me?”

Bessy looked up with a strange fear on her.  
It sounded like the old reckless tone, and she  
cried—

“Not going away like that, and with such  
thoughts, Lotty!”

“Well, no,” with an expression that softened  
as she regarded Bessy; “but I want to con-  
sole you—not to see you broken down like  
this.”

“You have your bible with you?”

“Yes.”

“There is nothing there that says, ‘What  
does it matter what becomes of you’—you  
will remember that, Lotty, when you feel to  
turn against yourself? And—will you re-  
member, dear, my faith in you, when we are  
parted, sometimes?”

“I will remember it for ever,” said Lotty;  
“it made me what I am—please God, will  
make me better. But don’t cry again—I have

so much to say, and the signal for sailing is already flying, Bessy."

"Lotty did not appear to have much to say when Bessy had somewhat recovered her composure ; she spoke of the life that lay before Bessy, and her confidence that her young sister would find it brighter than she deemed—but it was strange talk at that time, and gave no comfort.

"I can still hope for you, Bessy. And now, my dear, dear sister, I have kept you too long to myself, and there are friends here waiting to say good-bye also."

She smiled at some one near her, and Bessy turned round and saw Hugh Speckland, a tall, sun-burnt stranger, and her old friend Lucy.

Bessy was conscious of changing colour, and leaning for support on Lotty's arm, as they came towards her—conscious of trembling very much, and feeling her heart beat faster as the hand of Hugh Speckland was the first extended to her.

“Miss Calverton, I am glad to see you,” he said, in a voice as deep, if not as firm, as usual. Bessy fancied not as firm.

Bessy murmured some inarticulate response, and placed her hand in his. Did she think in all her life that it would come to this again?—that he would ever hold her hand thus, and look so strangely at her! But he was going away, and she could forgive him then, and wish him, in that heart which throbbed so wildly, a better home, a brighter life, than he had found in England. And he asked for her forgiveness, too, in a low tone, that was audible to her alone—and Lotty, Lucy, and her husband seemed to move a step or two away.

“Bessy, for all the past in which I wronged you in my thoughts, I have to ask your pardon—for all my rashness, sternness, self-conceit?”

“No, no—don’t ask it now, sir. The past and all that happened in it is a dream!” cried Bessy.

“ Will you forget it like a dream, and pardon me ?”

“ I bear you no malice, sir—I was to blame for my share in it. I would forget it all. If there be anything to forgive—I cannot see it!—you have my forgiveness, and my wish that you will be happy in Canada.”

“ Thank you.”

Bessy fancied that he smiled, as though her wishes were of little moment to him. Well, well, there was a time when he thought differently, and its memory would be less sad to her after that day !

“ You and Lucy will see my sister now and then, and sustain her in her efforts, Mr. Speckland,” said Bessy ; “ it is fortunate for her, as well as strange, that you leave England in the same ship.”

Lotty was at their side again, and Hugh was frowning at her. Alas ! even at such a time, thought Bessy, his bad temper must obtain the mastery.

“I must explain, sir,” said Lotty, in answer to his frown. “You have been my benefactor, counsellor and friend, and I have a right to own it. Bessy, it is to this generous man”—he was going away, when she caught him by the arm and held him back, despite a deeper frown than ever—“that I am indebted for this hope of a new life. Will you thank him with me now?—your thanks are of more value to him, perhaps.”

Bessy, in the whirl of ideas that beset her, did not for a moment think of Lotty’s peroration; then her colour mounted, and had it not been a parting for ever, she could have frowned too at so cruel and mocking a speech. Still she thanked Hugh Speckland, and held her hands towards him—this time of her own free will—and let him wring them in his own. He was embarrassed at her thanks, and murmured—

“Lucy was leaving for Canada with her husband—I had seen your sister by chance—

I—I thought—that is—*it was an old promise!*”

Bessy had never seen Hugh so confused before; she was troubled herself, and felt relieved when he turned to Lucy, and, after a few words with her, hurried on deck. An old promise!—and he had remembered it during those years of separation—and this was his noble proof of memory. He must have remembered her too, she thought, and not have wholly closed his heart against her! And she was glad of that, now he was going away for ever—she could remember him now with feelings that would pain her less.

But the minutes were speeding away—there was little time for reflection—and there was Lucy Speckland to kiss, and shed a few tears with, and congratulate on her marriage.

“Ah! and you must let me introduce you to that hero of mine, whom you and I have talked so much about—you see we are not all castle-builders, Bessy,” said Lucy.

“Thank God, no.”

“Harry,” said Lucy, touching her husband on the arm, “this is Bessy Calverton—my sister, my more than sister. Is he not a fine fellow, Bessy?” added the blind girl—“they tell me so; and he’s a conceited young man, and inclined to that opinion himself.”

And Harry laughed, and shook Bessy heartily by both hands; and Bessy thought he was as fine a fellow outwardly as so true and constant a lover deserved to be.

Were it not for the sake of that kind reader who has so far borne us company, we would endeavour to sketch this Harry. And as he *is* a fine fellow, we could wish the reader had made his acquaintance, and that the current of our story had brought him to the foreground at some earlier period than the last chapter of this history. Our experience of novels assures us that this is the first time the hero of a story has made his appearance in the last chapter; and we take the credit of

the novelty of the arrangement, and leave our lady-readers to sketch him after their own *beau-ideal*.

And time sped on still more swiftly, and the order sounded at last, from a Rhadamanthus in pea-jacket and sou'-wester, to clear the ship. And then the last partings took place between many aching hearts, and it was raining blessings on everybody's head.

Amidst the blinding mist which swam before her eyes, Bessy took her leave of them—of Lotty, Lucy, Lucy's husband, and of Hugh, who had returned—and then of Lotty again, who cried like a child, and kept her arms locked round her till the last minute.

“God reward you in good time for all your kindness, love and charity, to me—I feel your best time will begin from this day.”

“I cannot think that, Lotty.”

“I feel so—I believe so—you will leave me praying for it. Good-bye.”

“Good-bye—remember Mary Davis's bible,

Lotty—write to me often—God bless you!"

And so the sisters parted ; and Bessy went up the ladder with the rest of those who were warned to go ashore, and who had experienced partings as severe as hers, and felt the shock as deeply. Looking back, she saw how anxiously their faces were turned towards her still—all but the face of Hugh, who stood holding Lotty and Lucy's hands, as though restraining them.

She could have wished to see him turn and look towards her once again ; he had softened much towards her in that final leave-taking—if he would only turn once more, and look good-bye ! But he retained his old position, as though forcing his will thereto, and showing much of that firmness which in mistaken moments had been the curse of his life. 'And so we part,' thought Bessy, 'friends in heart at least, and bearing each other in more kind remembrance.' She could whisper a blessing on his life, too, as she went away.

Bessy was scarcely seated in the boat, when, to her amazement, the object of her thoughts followed her, and took his place beside her.

“Mr. Speckland!” exclaimed Bessy.

“Don’t be alarmed, Miss Calverton. It is all a mistake. I am not going to Canada myself—I have not thought of it.”

Bessy was at a loss to understand him in the first emotion that seized her; at a greater loss to guess why he took his place by her side, as though it were the old times back again, and he had a right to sit there. She felt her colour rise and leave her, and rise again, and with a faltering hand she drew the veil down before her troubled face.

Hugh Speckland was silent for several moments, as the boat rowed away from the ship at his signal.

“The ship will sail almost immediately. Shall the boat put us ashore, or shall we watch its departure here with greater ease?”

“I—I don’t know, sir.”

But Hugh Speckland knew, and the boatman received a second signal, and rowed more slowly to and fro. They were sitting in the stern of the boat, where a low voice could not be heard, and Hugh Speckland spoke in a very low voice, that vibrated in her heart, and made her tremble. A summer afternoon, with the sunshine streaming on them; with the busy life around them on the river; with the emigrant ship unfurling its sails, and the voices of the sailors at their labour.

“When your sister told you, Miss Calverton, of the little task I had set myself concerning her, she did not mention that she had repaid it a thousand-fold by a few words that showed how falsely I had judged you, and how cruelly I had shut my heart against the truth. But you have forgiven all the past?”

“Yes,” answered Bessy. He had waited

a long while for that answer, and asked the question twice—and when it came at length, he said, with a wild impetuosity—

“ Will you trust your future with me once again, Bessy ? I have marred it once, and am not worthy of your confidence ; but the brighter life may come—with God’s help, I believe it will, if you say Yes. Ah ! you shake your head, and my poor brother’s dying words are ringing in my ears again : ‘ There will never come a fair hour, a cheerful thought to make your work light, or your home worthy of the name ? ’ ”

“ Did he say that, Mr. Speckland ? ” she asked in an agitated whisper.

“ Yes.”

“ And is it true—you so clever, so famous, with all the best prospects in life opening out before you ? Oh ! Mr. Speckland—remember what I am, and how our engagement ended years ago. How can I make you happy ? ”

“By saying that which will set our lives together in one track, instead of each journeying along the solitary path, strewn with the ashes of our dead affections. Bessy, is there no power to make that affection live again?—no past memory that will endear us one to another, even yet? Is this true forgiveness, if you turn from me at the last?”

She kept her head averted from him, but it was to hide her tears; he stole his hand beneath her shawl and clasped her own, and though it trembled in his, it was not drawn away. There were words of Stephen Speckland ringing in her ears too at that time: more hopeful words—more true—than those which Hugh had uttered.

“In the far off days will you think of Hugh a little, for in the far off days I have a dreamy hope still. Should you and he meet in that distant time of which I speak, will you revive my name, and let it be perhaps a peacemaker between you?”

---

“You will love me,” he continued; “take me for your husband, become my teacher, guide and confidant again, set my steps aright and see they falter not as they turn away for ever from the No Church path—you will do this, dear Bessy?”

“I will do my best—dear Hugh!”

His arm stole round her waist and pressed her to his side, and he would have kissed her, in defiance of the wooden visaged waterman facing them, had Bessy allowed such impropriety. But he pressed her to his heart still, and though the boatman might have his suspicions—for he was a man who had seen life—he could not be exactly certain that Bessy’s waist was encircled by Hugh’s arm. Those shawls are comfortable things, and handy on the water!

They were looking towards the ship again, where were a crowd of faces now. The sails were being spread, the friends on board were waving their adieux to friends in the boats and

upon shore, a faint cheer broke out here and there from those whose hearts were not too full, or whose powers of endurance were more strong ; the bright sun shone on all this busy scene.

Full in the sunshine, with his arm round her still, the lovers stood up in the boat, and looked towards the voyagers so dear to them ; and one poor sobbing woman never missed that blessed gift of sight so much as then.

“I promised, Bessy, if you were to make me happy to let them know it, e'er they went away. We were to stand up thus, and wave our hands towards them, and, setting out on their new journey, they would wish God speed to ours !”

And as the ship with all its sails spread began that journey, Hugh and Bessy waved their hands ; and those who had been watching anxiously, and she who had not watched but listened to Lotty’s hurried exclamations, wished God speed to them, and prayed that

all their troubles ended with that memorable day.

And are there any earnest, heartfelt prayers ever listened to in vain ?

THE END.





13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

## MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S NEW PUBLICATIONS.

### MEMOIRS OF THE COURTS AND CABINETS OF WILLIAM IV. AND VICTORIA. From Original Family Documents. By the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, K.G. 2 vols., 8vo., with Portraits.

Among the principal interesting subjects of these volumes will be found: The Re-establishment of the Royal Household; the Sailor King and his Court; the Duke of Wellington in and out of Office; the Reform Cabinet and the Conservative Opposition; Career of Sir Robert Peel: Civil List Expenditure; Vicissitudes of Louis Philippe; Attacks on the Duke of Wellington; Coronations of William IV. and Queen Victoria; Rise and Fall of O'Connell; Lord Melbourne and his Ministry; Proceedings of the Kings of Hanover and Belgium; Private Negotiations at Apsley House; Secret History of Court Arrangements, &c.

"These valuable and important Memoirs should find a place in every library. The number of original documents, and private and confidential letters of the great men of the time, in the present volumes, invests the work with a fresh and authentic interest."—*Ses.*

### TRAVELS IN THE REGIONS OF THE AMOOR, AND THE RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS ON THE CONFINES OF INDIA AND CHINA; WITH ADVENTURES AMONG THE MOUNTAIN KIRGHIS, AND THE MANJOURS, MANTYRGS, TOUNGOUZ, TOUZEMTZ, GOLDI, AND GELYAKS. By T. W. ATKINSON, F.G.S., F.R.G.S., Author of "Oriental and Western Siberia." Dedicated, by per- mission, to HER MAJESTY. Second Edition. Royal 8vo., with Map and 83 Illustrations. £2. 2s., elegantly bound.

"A noble work. The entire volume is admirable for its spirit, unexaggerated tone, and the mass of fresh materials by which this really new world is made accessible to us. The followers, too, of all the 'ologies' will meet with something in these graphic pages of peculiar interest to them."—*Athenaeum.*

### BRITISH ARTISTS, FROM HOGARTH TO TURNER Being a Series of Biographical Sketches. By WALTER THORNBURY. 2 vols., 21s.

### HIGH CHURCH. By the Author of "NO CHURCH."

"'High Church' is an excellent story—excellent alike in design and execution. It is interesting, and the opinions it contains are marked with justice and good sense; the exigencies of the story do not beguile the author into exaggerations, showing how well the mere romantic interest of a novel may be served by keeping to simplicity and truth. In 'High Church' there is no morbid morality, no superhuman effects of virtue and self-sacrifice. The author has the gift of adjusting things in their true perspective, by which means the interest of the reader is served for everybody; he can understand the contradictions that are brought to bear, he sees how the mistakes of good and conscientious men contain the germ of the saddest tragedies in life; and by seeing for him-elf 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth' he is led to think with understanding charity of the contradictions, inconsistencies and mistakes of those around him. The novel of 'High Church' is one that we cordially recommend. We indulge the hope that the good influence of this book will not cease when the book is closed."—*Athenaeum.*

"'High Church' is a work of power and ability. There is originality in the plot, vigour in the style, and interest in the characters; and there is, moreover, what is rarely found in controversial novels, a tone of candour, moderation and fairness to opponents, seldom met with either in life or literature. The story is full of interest, which is sustained with great ability."—*Rev.*

"A novel of singular power. Some of the scenes are equal to anything that has ever been written by our best novellists."—*Messenger.*

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

**MESSRS. HURST AND BLACKETT'S  
NEW WORKS.—CONTINUED.**

**LODGE'S PEERAGE AND BARONETAGE** for 1861, under the especial Patronage of HER MAJESTY and H.R.H. THE PRINCE CONSORT and corrected throughout by the Nobility. 30th edition. 1 vol., royal 8vo., with the arms beautifully engraved, handsomely bound with gilt edges, 31s. 6d.

**THE ENGLISH SPORTSMAN IN THE WESTERN PRAIRIES.** By the Hon. GRANTLEY BERKELEY. Royal 8vo., with Illustrations.

**SEASONS WITH THE SEA HORSES; or, Sporting Adventures in the Northern Seas.** By JAMES LAMONT, F.G.S. 8vo., with numerous Illustrations.

**THE MEDICAL MISSIONARY IN CHINA: A Narrative of Twenty Years' Experience.** By WILLIAM LOCKHART, F.R.C.S., of the London Missionary Society.

**ESSAYS FROM THE QUARTERLY.** By JAMES HANNAY. 8vo.

**TEN YEARS' WANDERINGS AMONG THE ETHIOPIANS:** with Sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Civilised and Uncivilised Tribes from Senegal to Gaboon. By T. J. HUTCHINSON, F.R.G.S., Consul for Fernando Po. 8vo.

**HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY IV., KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.** By MISS FREER. 2 vols., with Portraits, 21s.

**STUDIES FROM LIFE.** By the Author of "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN," &c. 1 vol., 10s. 6d. bound.

**THE NEW NOVELS.**

**MY SHARE OF THE WORLD.** By FRANCES BROWNE. Dedicated to the Marquis of Lansdowne. 3 vols.

**KATHERINE AND HER SISTERS.** By the Author of "The Discipline of Life," &c. 3 vols.

**THE HOUSE ON THE MOOR.** By the Author of "Margaret Maitland." Second Edition. 3 vols.

**THE WORLD'S VERDICT.** By the Author of "The Morals of May-Fair." 3 vols.

**THE CRAVENS OF BEECH HALL.** By Mrs. F. GUISE. 2 vols.

**LUCY MELVILLE; or, Lost and Found.** 3 vols.



NOW IN COURSE OF PUBLICATION,

## HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY OF CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR MODERN WORKS.

Each in a single volume, elegantly printed, bound, and illustrated, price 5s.

A volume to appear every two months. The following are now ready.

---

### VOL. I.—SAM SLICK'S NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE ILLUSTRATED BY LEECH

Messrs Hurst and Blackett have very fitly inaugurated their Standard Library of Popular Modern Works with this admirable volume. With regard to this we can truly say.—Who can tire of the genuine sallies, the deep wisdom wrapped up in merry guise, and the side-splitting outbursts of genuine wit, in the pages of *Haliburton's Nature and Human Nature*? is particularly full of all these qualities; and to those who love a good laugh, when they can enjoy it accompanied by good matter for reflection, and who have not yet read this production of Sam Slick, we can heartily recommend this elegant Edition.”—*Critic*.

“The first volume of Messrs Hurst and Blackett's Standard Library of Cheap Editions forms a very good beginning to what will doubtless be a very successful undertaking. *'Nature and Human Nature'* is one of the best of Sam Slick's witty and humorous productions, and well entitled to the large circulation which it cannot fail to obtain in its present convenient and cheap shape. The volume combines with the great recommendations of a clear, bold type, and good paper, the lesser, but attractive merits, of being well illustrated and elegantly bound.”—*Post*.

“This new and cheap edition of Sam Slick's popular work will be an acquisition to all lovers of wit and humour. Mr Justice Haliburton's writings are so well known that no commendation is needed. The volume is very handsomely bound and illustrated, and the paper and type are excellent. It is in every way suited for a library edition, and as the names of Messrs Hurst and Blackett warrant the character of the works to be produced in their Standard Library, we have no doubt the project will be eminently successful.”—*Sun*.

---

### VOL. II.—JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.

“This is a very good and a very interesting work. It is designed to trace the career from boyhood to age of a perfect man—a Christian gentleman, and it abounds in incident both well and highly wrought. Throughout it is conceived in a high spirit, and written with great ability. This cheap and handsome new edition is worthy to pass freely from hand to hand as a gift book in many households.”—*Examiner*.

“The new and cheaper edition of this interesting work will doubtless meet with great success. John Halifax, the hero of this most beautiful story, is no ordinary hero, and this his history is no ordinary book. It is a full-length portrait of a true gentleman, one of nature's own nobility. It is also the history of a home, and a thoroughly English one. The work abounds in incident, and many of the scenes are full of graphic power and true pathos. It is a book that few will read without becoming wiser and better.”—*Scotman*.

“*'John Halifax'* is more than worthy of the author's reputation. We consider, indeed, that it is her best work. There are in it many passages of beautiful writing. The closing scenes are deeply pathetic, and few will lay down the book without tearful eyes. *'John Halifax'* is a picture, drawn with a masterly hand, of one of nature's gentlemen. Everybody who ever reads a novel should read this one.”—*Critic*.

“The story is very interesting. The attachment between John Halifax and his wife is beautifully painted, as are the pictures of their domestic life, and the growing up of their children, and the conclusion of the book is beautiful and touching.”—*Athenaeum*.

“*John Halifax* is one of the noblest stories among modern works of fiction. The interest of the story is in entralling, the characters admirably sustained, and the moral excellent.”—*Press*.

“In *'John Halifax'* every character is consistently conceived and very truthfully delineated. The incidents, the scenes, the 'still life,' are painted with a power that sustains the attention of the reader.”—*Spectator*.

“If the delineation of the grand in character, the glorious in action, the tender in feeling, the pure in heart, can bestow eminence on a production, this work must take its place among the standard and the excellent.”—*Sun*.

[CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.]

## HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY (CONTINUED).

### VOL. III.—THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.

BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

“Independent of its value as an original narrative, and its useful and interesting information, this work is remarkable for the colouring power and play of fancy with which its descriptions are enlivened. Among its greatest and most lasting charms is its reverent and serious spirit.”—*Quarterly Review*.

“A book calculated to prove more practically useful was never penned than ‘The Crescent and the Cross’—a work which surpasses all others in its homage for the sublime and its love for the beautiful in those famous regions consecrated to everlasting immortality in the annals of the prophets, and which no other writer has ever depicted with a pencil at once so reverent and so picturesque.”—*Sun*.

“In the mixture of story with anecdote, information, and impression, it perhaps surpasses ‘Bothen.’ Innumerable passages of force, vivacity, or humour are to be found in the volumes.”—*Spectator*.

### VOL. IV.—NATHALIE. BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

“‘Nathalie’ is Miss Kavanagh’s best imaginative effort. Its manner is gracious and attractive. Its matter is good. A sentiment, a tenderness, are commanded by her which are as individual as they are elegant. We should not soon come to an end were we to specify all the delicate touches and attractive pictures which place ‘Nathalie’ high among books of its class.”—*Athenaeum*.

“A tale of untiring interest, full of deep touches of human nature, exhibiting all that self-sacrificing devotion, and all that sensitive waywardness, the combination of which constitutes one of the most powerful charms, as well as one of the greatest riddles, of the female character. We have no hesitation in predicting for this delightful tale a lasting popularity, and a place in the foremost ranks of that most instructive kind of fiction—the moral novel.”—*John Bull*.

“A more judicious selection than ‘Nathalie’ could not have been made for Messrs Hurst and Blackett’s Standard Library. The series as it advances realises our first impression, that it will be one of lasting celebrity.”—*Literary Gazette*.

### VOL. V.—A WOMAN’S THOUGHTS ABOUT WOMEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.”

“A book of sound counsel. It is one of the most sensible works of its kind, well-written, true-hearted, and altogether practical. Whoever wishes to give advice to a young lady may thank the author for means of doing so.”—*Examiner*.

“The author of ‘John Halifax’ will retain and extend her hold upon the reading and reasonable public by the merits of her present work, which bears the stamp of good sense and genial feeling.”—*Guardian*.

“These thoughts are good and humane. They are thoughts we would wish women to think: they are much more to the purpose than the treatises upon the women and daughters of England, which were fashionable some years ago, and these thoughts mark the progress of opinion, and indicate a higher tone of character, and a juster estimate of woman’s position.”—*Athenaeum*.

“This really valuable volume ought to be in every young woman’s hand. It will teach her how to think and how to act. We are glad to see it in this Standard Library.”—*Literary Gazette*.

“It is almost unnecessary to remark that the authoress of ‘John Halifax’ must almost surely write a clever book; but there are deep thoughts upon the phases of woman’s conduct and disposition, in this volume, which far exceed the accuracy and excellence supersede the former productions of the same pen. The book will attract and delight those whom it does not profess to teach.”—*John Bull*.

“Originating in the purest of motives,—the desire of seeing the female portion of the community virtuous, wise, useful, happy,—these thoughts are worthy of the earnest and enlightened mind, the all-embracing charity, and the well-earned reputation of the author of ‘John Halifax.’”—*Herald*.

“A sensible well-written review of the true position and duties of women. There are some exceedingly valuable remarks upon female professions and handicrafts.”—*Critic*.

# HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

(CONTINUED).

## VOL. VI.—ADAM GRAEME OF MOSSGRAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MRS MARGARET MAITLAND."

"'Adam Graeme' is a story awakening genuine emotions of interest and delight by its admirable pictures of Scottish life and scenery. The plot is cleverly complicated, and there is great vitality in the dialogue, and remarkable brilliancy in the descriptive passages, as who that has read 'Margaret Maitland' would not be prepared to expect? But the story has a 'mightier magnet still,' in the healthy tone which pervades it, in its feminine delicacy of thought and diction, and in the truly womanly tenderness of its sentiments. The eloquent author sets before us the essential attributes of Christian virtue, their deep and silent workings in the heart, and their beautiful manifestations in the life, with a delicacy, a power, and a truth which can hardly be surpassed."—*Morning Post*.

## VOL. VII.—SAM SLICK'S WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES

"The humour of Sam Slick is inexhaustible. He is ever and everywhere a welcome visitor; smiles greet his approach, and wit and wisdom hang upon his tongue. The present production is remarkable alike for its racy humour, its sound philosophy, the felicity of its illustrations, and the delicacy of its satire. We promise our readers a great treat from the perusal of these 'Wise Saws and Modern Instances,' which contain a world of practical wisdom, and a treasury of the richest fun."—*Post*.

"We have not the slightest intention to criticise this book. Its reputation is made, and will stand as long as that of Scott's or Bulwer's Novels. The remarkable originality of its purpose, and the happy description it affords of American life and manners, still continue the subject of universal admiration. To say thus much is to say enough, though we must just mention that the new edition forms a part of the Publishers' Cheap Standard Library, which has included some of the very best specimens of light literature that ever have been written."—*Messenger*.

## VOL. VIII.—CARDINAL WISEMAN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST FOUR POPES.

"A picturesque book on Rome and its ecclesiastical sovereigns, by an eloquent Roman Catholic. Cardinal Wiseman has here treated a special subject with so much generality and geniality, that his recollections will excite no ill-feeling in those who are most conscientiously opposed to every idea of human infallibility represented in Papal domination."—*Athenaeum*.

## VOL. IX.—A LIFE FOR A LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

"We are always glad to welcome Miss Muloch. She writes from her own convictions, and she has the power not only to conceive clearly what it is that she wishes to say, but to express it in language effective and vigorous. In 'A Life for a Life' she is fortunate in a good subject, and she has produced a work of strong effect. The reader having read the book through for the story, will be apt (if he be of our persuasion) to return and read again many pages and passages with greater pleasure than on a first perusal. The whole book is replete with a graceful, tender delicacy; and in addition to its other merits, it is written in good careful English."—*Athenaeum*.

"The works of this author go beneath the surface, and present a picture of human joys and human sufferings in which those deep hopes, disappointments, and sorrows, which are the very well-springs of our existence, are brought to light, and set before us by a sympathising mind. 'A Life for a Life' is a book of this class. The characters are depicted with a masterly hand, the events are dramatically set forth; the descriptions of scenery and sketches of society are admirably penned; moreover the work has an object—a clearly defined moral—most poetically, most beautifully drawn; and through all there is that strong reflective mind visible which lays bare the human heart and human mind to the very core."—*Post*.

## HURST AND BLACKETT'S STANDARD LIBRARY

( CONTINUED ).

---

### VOL. X.—THE OLD COURT SUBURB. BY LEIGH HUNT.

“A delightful book, of which the charm begins at the first line on the first page, for full of quaint and pleasant memories is the phrase that is its title, ‘The Old Court Suburb.’ Very full, too, both of quaint and pleasant memories is the line that designates the author. It is the name of the most cheerful of chroniclers, the best of remembrancers of good things, the most polished and entertaining of educated gossip. ‘The Old Court Suburb’ is a work that will be welcome to all readers, and most welcome to those who have a love for the best kinds of reading.”—*Examiner*. “A more agreeable and entertaining book has not been published since Boswell produced his reminiscences of Johnson.”—*Observer*.

---

### VOL. XI.—MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS.

“We may save ourselves the trouble of giving any lengthened review of this work, for we recommend all who are in search of a fascinating novel to read it for themselves. They will find it well worth their while. There are a freshness and originality about it quite charming, and there is a certain nobleness in the treatment both of sentiment and incident which is not often found.”—*Athenaeum*.

---

### VOL. XII.—THE OLD JUDGE. BY SAM SLICK.

“This work is redolent of the hearty fun and strong masculine sense of our old friend ‘Sam Slick.’ In these sketches we have different interlocutors, and a far greater variety of character than in ‘Sam Slick,’ while in acuteness of observation, pungency of remark, and abounding heartiness of drollery, the present work of Judge Haliburton is quite equal to the first. Every page is alive with rapid, fresh sketches of character, droll, quaint, racy sayings, good-humoured practical jokes, and capitally-told anecdotes.”—*Chronicle*.

“These popular sketches, in which the Author of ‘Sam Slick’ paints Nova Scotian life, form the 12th Volume of Messrs Hurst and Blackett’s Standard Library of Modern Works. The publications included in this Library have all been of good quality; many give information while they entertain, and of that class the book before us is a specimen. The manner in which the Cheap Editions forming the series is produced deserves especial mention. The paper and print are unexceptionable; there is a steel engraving in each volume, and the outsides of them will satisfy the purchaser who likes to see a regiment of books in handsome uniform.”—*Examiner*.

---

### VOL. XIII.—DARIEN. BY ELIOT WARBURTON.

“This last production, from the pen of the author of ‘The Crescent and the Cross,’ has the same elements of a very wide popularity. It will please its thousands.”—*Globe*.

“This work will be read with peculiar interest as the last contribution to the literature of his country of a man endowed with no ordinary gifts of intellect. Eliot Warburton’s active and productive genius is amply exemplified in the present book. We have seldom met with any work in which the realities of history and the poetry of fiction were more happily interwoven.”—*Illustrated News*.

---

### VOL. XIV.—FAMILY ROMANCE; OR, DOMESTIC ANNALS OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

BY SIR BERNARD BURKE, ULSTER KING OF ARMS.

“It were impossible to praise too highly as a work of amusement this most interesting book, whether we should have regard to its excellent plan or its not less excellent execution. It ought to be found on every drawing-room table. Here you have nearly fifty captivating romances with the pith of all their interest preserved in undiminished poignancy, and any one may be read in half an hour. It is not the least of their merits that the romances are founded on fact—or what, at least, has been handed down for truth by long tradition—and the romance of reality far exceeds the romance of fiction. Each story is told in the clear, unaffected style with which the author’s former works have made the public familiar.”—*Standard*.







